



Prologue

I, [Liam sera Banfield], who completed my nobility training, have crossed my hundredth birthday and returned to my own territory.

I had originally wanted to play around more in the capital planet.

Heading the faction propping up Cleo as a figurehead, I am to this day requisitioning a long-running high-end hotel for my sojourns.

It's because I still have plans to head back in the future that I'm not letting go of the place that I requisitioned.

Since I already have that, if I erect a mansion as well—— ‘Huuh?’ is what people would say.

Even so, I feel like I've got something in mind for it.

I'd been considering various things, but presently, I've set up a facility in the middle of the courtyard of the enormous mansion.

I did say it was a courtyard, but because the mansion itself is way too huge, I can only feel as if I'm outdoors within it.

That facility is my own personal training room.

“——Come.”

Clad in black Japanese-style armor, I point the wooden sword-like implement in my right hand towards my junior disciples.

[Shishigami Fuuka] licks her lips greedily, her orange hair bundled behind her head like a blooming flower.

“Ya won’t even realize ya died!”

Her remark seems to indicate some concern for me, but her expression is full of glee.

In front of the gleeful-looking junior disciple wielding two katanas, I’m already ready with my own weapon.

This training implement that I call a wooden sword has an awfully high performance function.

The armor is the same.

However, Fuuka, and [Satsuki Riho] with her billowing navy blue hair both curl their lips upwards and draw.

What they’re holding are actual katanas.

“Ahah! Just die!”

What do they think their Senior Disciple is?

Both of them are coming at me with serious intent to kill—— We’re definitely students of the same art.

Sparks fly as I hit back against their slashes with my wooden sword.

Multiple cuts open up on my armor in mere moments.

It’s probably from my inability to deflect their blows, from not evading fully, or from the aftermath of the sword exchange.

Fuuka touches the roof with her feet after leaping upward.

It isn’t a zero-gravity environment, but she crouches upside-down on the roof—— then comes barreling right at me.

“I’ll cut ya up real good.”

Fuuka's eyes are bloodshot and she seems to be seriously intending to kill me, but that looks to be a distraction.

Turning my focus downward, Riho has gotten inside arms reach and is about to follow through with her sword-drawing technique.

Fuuka with her countless attacks.

Riho with her one-hit kill move.

The countless attacks are to hinder my movement, and the one-hit kill move is to finish me off.

“Kuh!”

——These two aren't such simple beings.

Even I can acknowledge the number of Fuuka's attacks, but each one of those are enough to inflict a fatal injury.

Fuuka is sending slashes towards both me and Riho with intent to kill.

Then, Riho starts the beginning motion of a deadly blow that can be considered overkill towards me and Fuuka.

Out of desperation I grip the handle of Riho's sword with my left hand, stopping her sword draw, and send a slash with my wooden sword to bring down Fuuka.

Riho immediately sends me tumbling with a foot sweep and makes to run my fallen body through with her sword.

“I'm the one who'll kill Senior Disciple!”

I roll out of the downward thrust and get to my feet, upon which I feel a chill run down my spine.

Fuuka has run around to my back and is closing in to take my head with her two swords.

I slash my wooden sword upwards as I turn around, batting Fuuka's blades up high.

I send a kick at her now-exposed abdomen.

In my panic I end up not holding back my strength, and Fuuka is blown backwards into the wall.

“Kaha- ugh! I-I'm the one who'll kill him. The Senior Disciple is mine!”

I turn away from Fuuka, who's buried in the wall coughing blood and about to come at me again.

When I turn around and slash horizontally, a slash flying at me is batted away in a shower of sparks.

Fuuka stands a short distance away with her sword at the ready.

The barrage of slashes that come flying are the essence of the Issen-ryu^[1],
Issen the Flash.

“Let's test our endurance, shall we! See who can last the longest!”

The number and power of her strikes both exceed mine.

Riho, cackling wildly, doesn't seem to have any idea of going easy on me.

There's some distance between both of us. It's probably around ten meters, but the point where sparks are flying is three meters ahead of me.

I'm clearly the one being pressured.

“You're coming in, too?!”

As I smack away the slashes coming at me, even more come flying in from the opposite direction.

Fuuka and Riho are standing in a straight line with me in the center.

As both of them are sending Flashes at me one after the other, the sparks from the clashes begin to scatter from right around me.

Fuuka takes one step closer to me.

“It looks like this is the end for even you, Senior Disciple! Rest easy, because I’ll preserve the Issen-ryu for ya! I’ll take care of Ellen, too!”

It looks like she’s already decided she’s won.

Riho takes one step after the other from the opposite direction as well.

“This is the punishment for looking down on us. I don’t dislike you, Senior Disciple, so I’ll keep you in my memory as long as I live.”

As they look to be in their late teens, I can only see both of them as high school students or so.

An ordinary person would probably only be able to see both of them strolling towards me with their swords in hand.

Just that there are sparks flying in midair between all these of us.

I mutter inside my helmet.

“A little longer. Just a little bit more.”

My body is already screaming out.

However, the one that’s first to give out are the implements.

The swords Riho and Fuuka wield are battered, and so is my wooden sword.

An electronic voice sounds from my armor.

□The training armor has exceeded its limit. Beginning forced purge.□

“W-wait!”

Right after that, without a single regard for my command to wait, the armor bursts open and leaves me in only my inner suit.

I'm dripping with sweat, my breathing is labored, and my entire body is covered with scratches.

“Shit!”

I sit down on the floor, frustrated. It seemed like I was just about to grasp something new.

Riho is gazing at her smashed up sword.

“Oh well, how many times has it been?”

Fuuka flings aside her broken swords, and the cleaning robots start to gather the pieces.

“No idea.”

As the two of them approach me, I gaze at my smashed up armor and wooden sword.

“Is it a failure no matter how much money I put into making them?”

Both the armor and wooden sword I prepared aren't for enhancing my capabilities.

It's the opposite.

They were implements to limit my capabilities so that my own ability would be raised higher.

It increased the burden on my body, and the wooden sword was truly difficult to swing.

With my real capabilities restricted, I told my two junior disciples to come at me planning to kill.

If I didn't do that—— I wouldn't be able to surpass my own limits after all.

I unclench my shaking right hand and stare at it.

“Why can't I reach him? Why—— Why can't I reach Master?”

I've started to become pitiful.

No matter how much I hone myself, no matter how many actual battles I experience, I don't have even a single sign of approaching Master's domain.

I'm still unable to reproduce the sword slash that I'd seen in my childhood; the one originating from a completely sheathed sword.

Fuuka comes over to console me while wiping off blood from the corners of her mouth.

“You're stronger than us, Senior Disciple, so won't ya reach it someday?”

Riho is stunned at Fuuka displaying such a disposition, as if Fuuka didn't understand anything at all.

“Dum~my. Senior Disciple doesn't need something like consolation. In the first place, things like words from us are meaningless. ——You've seen Master Yasushi's true strength too, haven't you? How's that compared to Senior Disciple?”

I don't need something like consolation.

That's an insult to us, who know Master's true strength.

Feeling awkward, Fuuka turns her face away.

“T-that wasn't what I meant!”

Fuuka averts her eyes because she's conscious of the gap in ability between Master and I.

“E-even I can see that Senior Disciple doesn’t measure up to Master Yasushi’s true strength. That said, we can’t gauge Master’s true strength either. It should be the same for you, too.”

Riho puffs her cheeks up.

“I know, you didn’t have to say it. We only know that Master Yasushi’s true strength is that amazing after all.”

That’s right. Master is truly amazing.

With the considerable difference in strength, his capabilities are at a level where it’s completely immeasurable to us.

Even though he normally looks like he’d lose to even a novice swordsman, he’s peerless once he draws his sword.

I’ve actually tried fighting against the image of Master in my mind multiple times before—— but even now, it didn’t look like I could win against him even once.

That hasn’t changed even after I defeated the man called Sword Saint within the Empire.

“What’s lacking. What exactly am I lacking? I—— Have I finally reached my limit?”

Am I unable to get stronger than this?

I feel crushed by such insecurities.

I’ve obtained what could be said to be the strongest form of violence as an evil lord, the Issen-ryu, but it’s likely to end half-assed because of my lack of talent.

It’s probably sufficient for a run-of-the-mill villain.

However, I want to get even stronger.

As a villain, and to take good care in continuing the Issen-ryu that Master conferred to me.

Running up to my sweat-stained self is Ellen, who's gotten considerably bigger.

Even though she was tiny when we first met, she currently looks around the age of ten.

"Master, I'll wipe off your sweat!"

"Alright."

I take a drink from her hands and let her dry me off.

I consider various things as I replenish my sustenance with the drink, but——

"Ellen, how old are you now?"

——I've become curious how old Ellen is.

Riho and Fuuka, who are equally dripping with sweat and out of breath as I am, keep silent after sensing what I want to say.

"I-I'm reaching thirty soon."

Someone aged thirty would probably be a splendid adult in my previous life, but here they're still a child.

Fuuka shrugs and gazes at me.

"Senior Disciple is too overprotective, don't ya think?"

As if she lost interest, Riho retrieves her mobile device and begins updating her blog.

"I didn't interfere since Senior Disciple is the one taking care of Ellen. But if you don't do something soon, Ellen won't be able to become a

swordsman of the Issen-ryu, you know.”

Ellen has a shocked expression after hearing their words, but quickly straightens up and retorts.

“Please don’t make fun of me! I’ve been training at Master’s side for more than ten years. Even I can perform at least the basics. T-though, the Flash is still beyond me.”

I did thoroughly hammer the basics into her, but Ellen still can’t perform the Flash.

That can’t be helped, either.

Even I took more than twenty years to do so.

Riho looks away from her screen, and gazes at Ellen with extremely cold eyes.

Ellen flinches from being directed with killing intent, but Riho continues speaking without regard for her.

“That’s not what I’m talking about. It’s something much more important.”

While shivering, Ellen shifts her gaze between me and Riho.

“Something much more important?”

Fuuka answers flatly.

“You haven’t killed anyone, have ya? Nope, ya haven’t.”

Seeing Ellen’s eyes open wide, I think.

——For her to become a swordsman, she has to kill a person.

Isn’t it a really strange thing to talk about in a universe that an intergalactic empire exists in?

Even though this universe has spacefaring battleships and humanoid weapons, battles to the death with swords still take place.

It's an outrageous-sounding topic, but it's unavoidable for one who chose this path.

I get to my feet and put a hand on Ellen's shoulder.

"I'll find you a proper opponent before long."

Ellen casts her eyes downward as if having received a shock, but she can't defy me as I'm her master. She replies in a small voice.

"——Yes."

[1] – Lit. 'Flash school or Flash martial art'

Yasushi's Flash of Insight

——It's become something outrageous.

A simple lie's blown up and has already gotten out of his control.

The man who has come to be called a Sword God before he could notice—— [Yasushi^[1]] is living with his family of three in a tiny room in a cheap apartment block.

The family had run from the planet they were living in before, and moved to their current location on a frontier planet.

“——This is a nightmare.”

Yasushi mutters while looking at the scant food arranged on the dinner table.

His wife furrows her brow hearing those words.

It seems she thought Yasushi was directing those at how severe their meal was.

“Be grateful that we can have something to eat! Whose earnings do you think these are from!?”

“Hihi! T-that's not it. I'm not grumbling about the meal, rather, I'd just been contemplating how we've gotten pushed into this situation, that's all.”

Looking at the slumped Yasushi, his wife heaves a small sigh.

The small boy pleads with Yasushi's wife—— the boy's mother.

“Mom, I want more to eat.”

“Sorry. The money will come in from my part-time job very soon, so please endure until then, okay?”

[Nina], Yasushi’s wife, has long silky black hair.

The glasses-wearing ladylike woman had been supporting Yasushi and their child before with her job.

However, she hasn’t been able to find a proper job on the planet they moved to.

They’ve moved here with her savings, and are eking out a living by rationing out those very savings.

Nina is currently working part-time, but as her earnings aren’t much, their living conditions have taken a turn for the worse.

She glares at Yasushi.

“From the start, why did you choose this planet of all places? It’s a poorly developed frontier planet, and there aren’t any jobs because of the poor business here. On top of that, aren’t all the high taxes just making our lives worse?”

The family having to move to this harsh planet was none other than Yasushi’s fault.

“T-there wasn’t any choice! We’d have been discovered if we went to a developed place!”

Yasushi having to move to such a harsh planet—— was completely Liam’s fault.

The video on the electronic newspaper atop the table plays back automatically.

It’s the official communique from the Gudwar Supremacy.

□We are ushering in Yasushi of the Issen-ryu as the Royal Palace's swordsmanship instructor! Anyone with information will be fairly compensated. Find Yasushi-dono at all costs!□

Izel, the former crown prince of the Supremacy, had been slain by Liam in battle just a while ago.

After that, the name of the Issen-ryu had spread throughout the Supremacy's territory.

Having prided themselves on their strength, excitement is welling up in the Supremacy after it became known that there was an ultimate sword art out there previously unknown to them.

In the end, as they naturally couldn't expect to engage Liam, they started considering if it might be possible to employ his master Yasushi instead.

Furthermore, even other countries started thinking that the Issen-ryu was the real thing since the Supremacy was searching for it, and also began the search for Yasushi as well.

The countries and nobles promising good employment were unceasing, and on top of that, multiple strong warriors looking to make a name for themselves were aiming to take Yasushi's life.

“It's that guy's fault. All because of him, I—— Damn it all!”

Liam is a noble of the Algrand Empire.

Moreover, he's a feudal lord representing a powerful country.

Rather than try to make a move against that Liam, targeting Yasushi would probably be a better idea—— Thinking that way, the people around had started hunting for him with bloodshot eyes.

Nina gives Yasushi a cold look while engaging their child.

“I can't help but think that's a lie, though. Yasu-kun, were you really something like the master of an Empire noble?”

Yasushi is a hustler—— that is, an entertainer.

And, the sword art known as the Issen-ryu that he taught Liam was one of his lies.

Teaching Liam swordsmanship using one of his parlor tricks ended up causing the birth of a monster.

And, the two disciples he had brought up as assassins were also as strong as monsters.

Even though Yasushi himself is weak, he's the man that raised three monster-like existences.

“Even I don't want to believe it! I don't even know what happened to the disciples I sent to assassinate Liam; I've had enough!”

Yasushi came to this frontier planet to conceal himself from Liam and the two assassins.

No one would think that I'll be at such a planet! ——Is what he had thought.

However, he's regretting his move here.

“——Haah, even having done that, life is difficult.”

Nina says coldly. Part of that is her seeming displeasure regarding Yasushi's daily life.

“In that case, how about finding a job, too?”

“Uu!? T-that is, well—— I'm sorry.”

Nina is working part-time, but that's not sustainable long term.

The reason is taxation.

After deducting tax from a day's earnings, they're left with around thirty percent.

With that in mind, it's difficult to find motivation to work.

Also, the hourly wage from the part-time work is really low, and despite that, she's exploited at work.

"It would have been better if we didn't run away, seeing our current state. This too is entirely Liam's fault. Since that guy's been spreading the name of the Issen-ryu."

As Yasushi wallows in regret, Nina begins clearing up after the meal.

"Even if you aren't actually a top-notch swordsman, you're able to instruct people in swordsmanship. That guidance is the real thing, so rather, why not set up a dojo and see? Honestly speaking."

Yasushi looks up at Nina's remark.

"Huh?"

Nina explains further while gazing at the astonished Yasushi.

"That's why, if you're able to teach others, running a dojo will come quick. With the Issen-ryu being a hot topic at the moment, won't there be plenty of people who'll fork out money front and center to learn it? Since you've brought up three disciples already, you'll undoubtedly succeed at it."

Liam, Riho, and Fuuka were all brought up by Yasushi.

That is proof that Yasushi has the ability to nurture people as well.

He's only brought up three disciples so far, but his current success rate is hundred percent.

Doesn't Yasushi have the talent to nurture people?

——He came to a realization at this point.

“T-that’s right! If I can raise up many disciples, I’ll have both people around to guard me, and wealth! No, wait, if I do something like that, people will know that I’m here.”

Yasushi, grumbling as he thought, comes up with a simple answer.

“It’ll be fine if I change my name! I’ll call it something like the Original Issen-ryu, and I’ll market it under a false name! Recently there’s been a slew of dojos with similar names, so they’ll most likely think my dojo’s one of them!”

Nina makes a face as if questioning if that arrangement is okay for someone in the role of a martial arts instructor, but she’s glad that Yasushi is showing her his motivation.

“Since it’s Yasu-kun, you’ll definitely be able to do it. I’ll help out too!”

“Yeah!”

This Nina is the so-called dependable woman.

She’s earnest and able to do her job but—— her one flaw is that she’s charmed by hopeless men like Yasushi.

With this, the Original Issen-ryu dojo is founded on a desolate frontier planet.



“A meal I don’t have to work for is the most delicious.”

It’s breakfast time.

I, who is being waited on by Amagi and Bryan, am eating a pointlessly extravagant meal right at the start of the day.

In front of my eyes is a simple breakfast.

In my previous life's terms, it's something like eggs sunny-side up, toast, salad, and soup.

However, all of the ingredients used are the finest products carefully handpicked from within my territory.

There's even an omelet made from eggs which individually cost the equivalent of tens of thousands of yen.

——However, the yogurt is made by Bryan himself.

Chefs gathered from within the territory are assigned to cook such a variety of ingredients.

In my previous life's terms, I've gathered what amounts to chefs from three-Michelin-starred restaurants.

Within these chefs, I change up the people cooking for me each day.

It almost looks as if I'm making top-rate chefs rotate around in a canteen.

An orchestra is playing appropriate music in this wide room... Now this is an evil lord's breakfast.

Amagi has a question for me regarding my earlier remark as she clears away the plates that I've finished.

“Young Master, what has happened all of a sudden? In the first place, you head out almost every day on official business, though?”

Even Bryan has an evidently worried expression on his face.

“Could it be weariness from the consecutive days of excessive training? Liam-sama, this Bryan is worried. Shall we take a break from official duties for today?”

For these two, I probably give off the impression that I'm hard at work.

However, from my point of view, it's all for my sake.

It's not labor for others, but labor for myself.

“Did you think that such playing around was me being serious at my job?”

Amagi has her usual impassive expression, but she seems doubtful of my remark.

“Young Master hasn't been playing at being a villain at all recently and has been working hard on running the territory in earnest, though?”

“I don't have the time to play around after all. Currently, I want to truly become stronger.”

“——You've been playing around, and yet you don't have the time to play around? Which one could it be?”

“There's no deep meaning to it, so quit overthinking it.”

Seeing Amagi earnestly contemplate my reply, I can't help but feel a little apologetic.

Bryan has a glum look on his face upon hearing me dismiss my work running the territory as playtime.

“I hope that running the territory would be first in mind, however. In the first place, Liam-sama has no need for swordsmanship.”

Bryan admonishes me, who's been solely concentrating on refining my Issen-ryu.

However, I'm not the kind of person to correct myself from being admonished.

“I refuse. Besides, I have the feeling I'll have a breakthrough very soon. At the same time I can sense my limitations too, though.”

I have the feeling I'll have a breakthrough very soon, but I'm also feeling like I've hit a wall.

I don't know what more I can do.

As I get started on the yogurt dessert, Kukri's form appears from my shadow.

Bryan wrinkles his face at his arrival.

"Kukri-dono, Liam-sama is having his meal."

"Yes, I understand. However, I've received orders to treat this matter with urgency. I believe this report should take priority as a result. ——Liam-sama, pardon me for intruding on your meal."

I speak to the kneeling Kukri at my side as I continue partaking in my food.

"Have you finished investigating?"

"Yes."

I stop eating and turn to Kukri to hear his report.

"You've found Master!?"

What I had used Kukri to investigate was Master's whereabouts.

Reflecting that I'm currently stuck in my growth, I've made Kukri investigate his whereabouts for a time now.

"And, where is Master now? I'll go meet him immediately."

I can't get stronger as I am now.

In order to request guidance from Master, I was thinking of leaving to meet him myself, but—— upon hearing Kukri's reply, my joy turns to anger.

"Unfortunately, there's a great number of people taking the name of Yasushi-sama from the Issen-ryu, and we haven't been able to pinpoint the actual person. We're currently hurrying the identification of Yasushi-sama, but it is taking time because of the lack of manpower."

Kukri and his kin are exceptionally superb, but the problem lies with their number.

As they're considerably few, they lack the ability to use numbers to quell a problem.

"I'll dispatch some subordinates for your use."

"I've already employed them in the investigation. My group does the actual confirmation, but there's too much ruffraff so we require time in doing so."

The dispatched subordinates are unable to distinguish the real thing.

Kukri and his kin likely can, but they're exceedingly few in number.

□——These impostors are getting too damn cocky for their own good.□

Because I've become famous, the number of impostors have increased all at once.

'Do it, True Issen-ryu!', 'Original Issen-ryu!', and the like.

I'd left it aside since more fakes would just spring up from the ashes of the ones I've turned to dust, but it's unforgivable that I can't grasp Master's location because of that.

I leisurely get to my feet.

"Call Tia and Marie."

Kukri starts sinking into my shadow.

"As you wish."

◇

A golden-haired beauty adorned in a maid outfit shows me a big smile.

"Liam-sama, Tia-nyan is so happy you called, nyan!"

The one striking a cute pose with a raised leg and saying “Nyan nyan” is Tia.

Next to that scene, a purple-haired beauty is twitching her bunny ears like a cute animal.

“Marie is happy too, pyon!”

Marie is acting like a rabbit with her maid outfit on, but actually, both of them have modified their own outfits.

Tia has decorated hers with something resembling the ears and tail of a cat.

Marie has decorated hers with something resembling the ears and tail of a rabbit.

Wearing cosplay outfits of excessively high quality, they’ve thrown away their shame and are pressing their cheeks together while linking hands.

“Liam-sama’s maid Tia is here at your call, nyan!”

“Liam-sama’s maid Marie is here at your call, pyon!”

Despite normally detesting each other’s guts to the point of killing, they’re going so far as to act as good friends because of my order.

They’re perfectly in unison, so they’ve probably practiced this multiple times.

Standing next to me, my head knight Klaus averts his eyes from the two changed women, who were once his former seniors.

If the two former representative knights of the Banfield domain had swapped into maid outfits and started cosplaying, anyone else would probably avert their eyes as well.

They were embarrassed about it just a while ago, and yet now they’ve instead raised their proficiency, as if to say that they’re taking pride in their current form.

They must have endured many hardships to get to this point—— but that isn't my concern at the moment!

“Are you messing around with me?”

The two start to panic at those words.

“Huh!? Is this not to your liking, nyan?”

“Would mascot costumes have been better instead, pyon?”

I like how they're trying to butter me up, but Master takes precedence.

“You lot are dismissed from being my maids. Go back to being knights.”

“Huh?”

“N-no way!”

I thought they'd definitely rejoice from being reinstated as knights, yet both Tia and Marie have pale expressions on their faces.

“Is there a problem?”

Tia nods slightly.

“Yes. I'm unhappy that I'm unable to be of assistance to Liam-sama, nyan.”

Marie covers her face with both hands.

“To think that I won't be able to be humiliated by Liam-sama any more, I'd rather die, pyon.”

——These two, I'd have fired them both if they weren't so exceptional.

I'd dislike anyone who has excessive quirks even if they were exceptional.

“Don't grumble. And stop with that 'nyan' and 'pyon' nonsense, it's annoying! Starting now, you two are reinstated as knights. Klaus!”

“Yes!?”

Having called out Klaus’ name, I’ll have him brief these two about their assignments.

“Send Tia to the border of the Supremacy right now. Leave the border to her. She’s a disappointing woman, but she can govern after all. Send her over with ten thousand ships.”

“Ah, that’s why you called me back, isn’t it.”

Klaus, who can be said to be my right-hand man, has been left in charge of the border up till now.

Being truly able to do whatever he sets out to, he’s exceptional.

Klaus has an expression of relief on his face, but Tia is gazing at me with imploring eyes.

“Liam-sama is heading to the border too, right? Right!?”

“Are you a dumbass? Why must I pick a fight with those from the Supremacy? It’s simple; you’re replacing Klaus since he’s returned to the province.”

“No waaaay!”

Tia cries while hugging her head upon hearing that she’ll be sent to the border alone.

I’ll give an order to Marie next.

“Marie, I’ll have you lead a small but elite fleet of ships.”

“I have no objections to that, but? Would you be dispatching me to someplace as well?”

I enlighten the quivering Marie.

“You’ll be my escort. Seeing as we’ll be going on a trip for a time being.”

Hearing that, Marie breaks into a wide smile as if in bloom. She then looks down with unrestrained glee at Tia, who has instantly collapsed on the ground.

Tia clenches her teeth while looking at the triumphant Marie.

——These two are creating this scene in their cosplay-like maid outfits.

Having not heard about this, Klaus scoots closer to me.

“Liam-sama? Uh, I haven’t heard anything about this, though? What do you mean you’re going on a trip?”

“I’ll be searching for Master, so I’ll be away for a while. I’ll leave the rest to you, Klaus.”

“——Huh?”

[1] – Lit. ‘cheap warrior’

Image Play

At a frontier planet.

A kimono-clad man with an unshaven face walks down the middle of a desolate street, a katana tucked in his belt.

Men that look to be his pupils follow along behind him.

Fearing them, people clear out of the way.

One of the pupils speaks to the man—— Yasushi.

“Sword God-sama, how about that shop over there? Their girl is rumored to be quite the cutie.”

“Hmm, looks like we need to get a taste of that.”

The restaurant, opened by a couple after much effort, has the reputation of providing home cooked-style dishes.

Barely days after they opened, the rumor that their daughter helps out in the restaurant started going around.

Upon entering the shop, they see her helping out, still clad in her school uniform with an apron on top.

Filthy looks appear on the men’s faces.

The girl is exactly like the rumors. No, she’s even more beautiful than they thought.

“Welco-... me...”

The girl, who's helping out at her parents' shop after class, has her smile frozen in place after taking note of Yasushi and his pupils. She starts to tremble.

Noticing her state, her parents dash out from behind the counter to stand in front of Yasushi, as if to protect their daughter.

"S-so this is Sword God-sama! We welcome your patronage!"

Looking at the owners bowing deeply to him, Yasushi retorts in great spirits.

"Get cooking. And bring out the wine. I'll allow that girl over there to pour it for us."

The usual customers look like they want to say something, but after seeing the pupils' glares, they avert their gaze.

No one can defy them.

On the brink of tears, the shop owner turns around to his daughter.

"I'm sorry. I'm so sorry."

"It's okay. I-If it's just pouring wine, I don't mind."

Seated at the table, Yasushi and his pupils make merry with loud voices.

Arms wrapped around the shoulder of the girl, who's still a student, they begin to enjoy themselves while eating and drinking.

The customers have run, and the only ones still in the shop are the owner, his wife, his daughter, and Yasushi's gang.

Two hours pass. Having made a mess of the shop in their partying, Yasushi and his pupils make to leave.

"Thanks for the food. Well, let's go."

At Yasushi's words, the pupils stand up and start to walk out as well.

No one bothers to make any payment, but the owner entreats Yasushi in a panic.

“Sword God-sama, p-please return my daughter!”

The owner tries to rescue his daughter, who's being carried away on one of Yasushi's pupil's shoulders.

However, a vulgar smile appears on Yasushi's face.

“I'll take her with me since I've taken an interest in her. I'll return her once I've had enough. With that, I wonder if you'll still have any complaints for me, the Sword God Yasushi?”

Yasushi brings his face right up to the owner's.

The helpless daughter's expression pleads for help, but the owner ends up trembling and hanging his head.

“N-no, there isn't.”

Falling to his knees, the owner clenches his fists in frustration.

However, he can't defy them.

In any case, he's dealing with the Sword God Yasushi.

“Hmph. A wise decision. If you defy me, Count Banfield, my top disciple, won't keep quiet after all.”

Yasushi and his pupils break out into uproarious laughter as they make to exit the shop.

Sword God Yasushi's top disciple is that Count Banfield.

A noble of great renown and honor, excelling in both the pen and the sword.

He's a famous person, and his name is spread throughout the Empire.

Right now, he's a young power broker who gathered an enormous faction, so he's not anyone a citizen of the frontier can defy.

The owner is unable to do something like oppose the sword master of such a person.

As tears of frustration fall from his eyes, Yasushi bumps into someone on the way out.

"Watch where you're going."

The young man glares at Yasushi, entering the store. He takes a few good sniffs as he mutters.

"The smell of miso-simmered mackerel is definitely from this place!"

Clad in a kimono, the young man has a katana strapped to his waist.

To his side, a red-haired girl not yet of age holds onto his hand, wearing a similar kimono and carrying a katana of disproportionate length.

"Master, the shop is dirty."

"Well sorry but my belly calls for mackerel miso, so I'm not changing my mind. Oi, owner, get this cleaned up quickly."

The young man orders conceitedly.

The owner would normally be a little guilty at the mess, but he doesn't have such leeway to do so at the moment.

As the young man strolls straight into the shop, two women follow behind him, pushing aside the pupils as they do so.

"Senior Disciple, I'll have one large portion to start."

"I'm okay with that, too."

The young man behaves generously after hearing them say so.

“So then, three mackerel misos? How about you?”

“I’ll be fine with what you’re having, Master.”

The group of four entering the shop take their seats and start browsing the menu, as if paying no heed to the situation around them.

However, Yasushi and his pupils have gotten furiously red since a while ago.

“Tourists? It looks like they don’t know the rules of this planet.”

The pupil with the largest and most intimidating people saunters up to the four, placing a hand on his katana.

He breathes harshly as he walks up to them, but they don’t even spare him a single glance.

The young man looks at Yasushi in provocation instead.

Zero attention is paid to his pupils.

Realizing this, Yasushi walks up to the young man.

“Seems like you have no idea I’m the Sword God Yasushi. Or, are you a swordsman confident in his abilities?”

The pupils draw their katanas inside the shop.

With looks on their faces like even women and children won’t be spared, they prepare to cut them all down in this very place.

What Yasushi and his pupils are feared for isn’t just the Issen-ryu or Count Banfield’s backing.

On top of being violent enough to kill anyone defying them on the spot, they’re also the swordsmanship instructors for the frontier planet’s lord.

There are few on this planet able to defy Yasushi.

He speaks.

“Don’t you know, brat, that now would be a good time to apologize? I’m close to this planet’s Lord. Do you think you’ll get away without a scratch after picking a fight with me?”

Then, the young man replies immediately.

“Are you an idiot? I’ve been picking a fight with you lot from the start. No, rather, I’ve deliberately come to settle the fight that you picked with me. Be thankful.”

As he finishes his sentence, all of Yasushi’s pupils are blown away besides the one carrying the owner’s daughter.

The walls of the shop and the door are sent flying, and the pupils are thrown outside.

Seeing that happen in an instant, Yasushi and the sole remaining pupil——
And finally, the owner and his family gape in shock.

The young man stands, turning to the owner.

“Four mackerel miso set meals. Large.”

The owner contemplates.

(...What’s a mackerel miso set meal?)



There’s an idiot taking Master’s name for himself.

The man going so far as to take Master’s appearance in his impersonation seems to have some knowledge about him, but he’s a third-rate swordsman himself.

Even with me in front of him, he didn't understand at all who exactly he was speaking to.

Even though I sent his pupils flying at a whim, he still has an expression that says he doesn't understand what just happened.

“Oi, what happened to you? As an instructor of the Issen-ryu, don't go about getting shocked by something of this level. Even as a fake, shouldn't you at least have the corresponding ability?”

As I close in on them with a big grin, their faces freeze.

However, one of the pupils tosses away the daughter he was carrying and makes a break for it.

It looks like his pupils have more ability than he does.

In an instant, Fuuka leaps onto the back of that pupil, pinning him to the ground in a mount.

She draws her katana, placing its edge across the back of his neck.

“Don't even think about running! Isn't it forbidden in the Issen-ryu to run away? In a fight, ya either kill, or die!”

“You're mistaken! I-I was just hired to pretend to be one!”

Seeing as the man himself confessed to being a fake, Fuuka sheathes her katana.

She looks down her nose with cold eyes at the pretender.

“What a wasted trip. This is the fifth time now.”

Thinking he'd be let go, the pupil raises his head, only to be punted away by a kick from her.

The fake taking Master's name for himself seems to have caught on slightly after seeing us.

“U-Uh, could it be...”

“Pleased to meet you, imposter scum. ——Liam sera Banfield has purposely headed out to this place.”

His face pales.

As he quivers and falls to his knees, I tell him to bring out the lord of this planet.

“Call that shitty lord hiring you over here.”

“Huh? N-no, the lord is a busy person, so—”

“A mere lord out in the sticks can’t meet with me, a Count? Apparently, it seems like he wants me to spare no effort in crushing him.”

“Hiiiih! I-I’ll contact him right away!”

Using both status and authority has meaning for sure.

I’ll banter with the strong, but it’s my philosophy to thoroughly oppress the weak.

I wonder how this minor lord of the frontier will react, knowing that he not only let an impostor go free in his territory but even employed him, sully the name of the Issen-ryu?

I return to my seat, looking at the owner who has a troubled expression.

“Well, where’s the mackerel miso set meal?”

“That, well—— What exactly is a mackerel miso set meal?”

Apparently, what I had thought was the smell of miso-simmered mackerel was something entirely different.



Fifteen minutes later.

I, who's tucking into the food brought to me, have finally eaten my first mackerel miso set meal in my reincarnated life.

"This is it!"

I remember its fragrant smell as I walked past the shop selling it, in my pitiful life prior to reincarnation.

Having difficulty even finding a meal in those days, such food was beyond my means then, but there was no sign of it existing even in this vast intergalactic empire.

There were things somewhat like it, but they were somehow off.

I had also thought about making it myself instead, but being busy with my training, I didn't have the time to reproduce it.

Even when I told my chefs what it was like, the things they produced were bizarre.

I got a little irritated that what they produced was just conventionally delicious.

However, coming to this frontier planet, I've finally managed to come across the mackerel miso set meal.

I feel like I've unearthed a treasure.

Next to the four of us chowing down on our meals in big bites, the lord of the frontier planet is prostrating himself.

"To not realize that Count Banfield is paying me a visit, I've committed a grave offense! Indeed, it was my blunder to take that impostor at his word and hire him as our swordsmanship instructor. I'll punish them right away!"

Looking outside, the fakes have been bound and captured by the minor lord's knights and made to kneel.

Their faces are marred by bruises from being hit.

I speak to the minor lord.

“We’re eating. Quiet down.”

“P-please excuse my mistake! However, in comparison to such a dingy establishment, my house is in the midst of preparing a party. It would be an honor to have the Count’s attendance.”

Don’t eat food from such a place, come eat at my house! ——Is what he’s suggesting.

Normally I’d accept this indulgence, but the mackerel miso set meal takes higher priority.

Also, personally, someone who hired an Issen-ryu impostor and recognized his swordplay as legitimate is absolutely unforgivable to me.

“Shut your mouth. I’ll kill you if you open it for the third time.”

As the minor lord falls silent, Riho speaks while eating her mackerel miso.

“Senior Disciple, what will we do from now?”

“Let’s head to the next planet for starters. We’ll take the opportunity to enjoy our vacation.”

Since I’ve managed to come across this mackerel miso set meal, other planets are bound to have treasures as well.

Riho gives a bored look.

“We’re just roaming the countryside, aren’t we? It’d be nice if there were strong opponents, but these impostors are basically shitty small fries, so there’s no fun in it.”

“Then, let’s use this chance to look for strong fighters and challenge them. It’ll be warrior training.”

While we're on this short vacation, let's go around crushing famous dojos.

Now isn't this really something an evil lord would do?

Finishing her meal, Fuuka gets to her feet.

"That's nice! I'll go first!"

"Haah? First up is me, isn't it? My viewcount's been dropping lately because of my lack of kills."

The bloody underground idol of the universe, huh? Since Riho has the face for video streaming, it seems she wants to stand out.

"We'll take turns going one by one. Ellen, you'll be taking part, too."

"Y-yes."

Ellen trembles hearing that, but remains stoic as usual otherwise.

As expected, it seems she still has a strong aversion to taking another person's life.

I regret a little how I'd gone overboard taking good care of her.

Once we finish our meal, the owner and his family look uncomfortable.

"Oi, the bill."

"Y-yes, right away!"

I take out my card and make an electronic payment, but the owner's eyes open wide in shock.

"U-um, is it alright to receive this much in payment?"

"Take it as an apology for wrecking the shop. More importantly, bring your family along to my territory."

“Huh?”

I give an order to the surprised three. The thugs earlier were only aiming for the daughter, but I’m aiming for the whole family.

“My cravings for this food will pop up from time to time.”

Because I wasn’t able to eat it even if I wanted to in my previous life, there are times now where I strangely start craving for it.

Since it’s troublesome to come all the way out to this far-off frontier planet to eat it, it hit me that it’d be better to bring this family back to my territory.

Isn’t this something befitting an evil lord?

“No, well, that...”

Troubled, the owner looks towards the minor lord still prostrating himself.

I address the minor lord.

“No complaints, right?”

“None at all!”

“That’s right. Gather your belongings right away. This is an order. You don’t have the right to refuse.”

It’s sad that a family’s lives have to be subject to my whims like that.

Just, I end up wanting to say a few words to the daughter who helps out in the shop.

“You, are you their daughter?”

“Yes.”

The daughter with a plain air about her looks like she will become a matchless beauty given some polish.

“You helping out in the shop? Looks like earning extra money is tough.”

“No, I don’t receive any. Um, since this shop is my parents’ dream, I thought I’d help out, too.”

It looks like she starts helping once classes finish.

What a kind-hearted daughter.

To be honest, I feel a little guilty that I’m making this family relocate to my territory because of my mood. But, taking my words back will do my reputation as an evil lord no favors.

Wondering if I can do something for them, I land on one thing.

“Good girl, helping out your parents. I like you; once you reach my territory, use my name at the government office. I’ll arrange for your school fees to be covered and for scholarship funds to be given.”

“Huh?”

My mood brightened from this evil lord act of throwing money at a beautiful girl, and the act of somewhat making amends to the family, my eyes land on the yet-prostrating minor lord.

I forgot this guy existed.

“Bastard, I’ll wipe out your family tree if you get too big for your britches after this, so watch yourself.”

Doing something like employing and recognizing officially the group posing as Issen-ryu, you bet I’d be furious.

Having emphasized fully that I’d destroy him if he does it again, the minor lord responds.

“I’ll turn over a new leaf from now on!”

“Naturally.”

Well, we don't have the time to dawdle around in a place like this.

We quickly exit the store in search of Master.

Huge Miscalculation

During the time of Liam's search for his Master.

At what looks to be a dojo constructed out of a small prefab, Yasushi raises high the once-discarded wooden plank, the words 'The Original Issen-ryu' written on it.

"Fuhahahah! Now this is my dojo!"

"How lovely, Yasu-kun!"

From the land acquisition to the preparation of the building, Yasushi's dojo was entirely due to his wife Nina's efforts.

Yasushi himself didn't contribute a single thing.

Even so, the mood around Yasushi alone is first-class.

Nina praises his dougi-clad^[1] figure.

"It's fitting for Yasu-kun to wear a dougi."

"You bet! As you know, people go off of appearances. Leave the mood-making to me."

Nina speaks seriously to Yasushi, whose chest is swelling with pride.

It's about the management of the dojo.

"Though, can you instruct just from mood-making alone? Yasu-kun, you're not very strong, are you?"

“I’ve the experience of making absolute monsters out of my three disciples after all. I’ll get by even if I cut some corners in teaching my students. In the future, I’ll make sure to suck some lord dry of their finances while acting as their swordsmanship instructor.”

“That lowlife nature of yours is lovely, too.”

Satisfied looking at the spellbound Nina, Yasushi resolves to not fail this time.

(It’s been nothing but failures since I ran from the Banfield territory, but I’ll have a comfortable noble house take good care of me this time for sure.)

There’s plenty of nobles seeking the Issen-ryu’s name, and he also has Liam as an example of success.

However... It’s said that poverty dulls the wit.

Thinking about earning money for a living, Yasushi ended up forgetting something important.

A knight sidles up with a brochure in hand to Yasushi, who still has the Issen-ryu signboard raised.

The man seems ill-natured.

“So this is the Issen-ryu’s dojo?”

“We’re getting pupils right away, huh? That’s right. I’m the instructor of the Original Issen-ryu.”

Yasushi doesn’t give his name.

It’ll be troublesome if he was outed as the Sword God after all.

“It related to that Count Banfield?”

“Ahh, something like a distant relation? There’s various Issen-ryu styles around after all.”

“I want to get stronger, but will that happen after training here?”

“Of course! Even if I look like this, I’m still a first-rate instructor, you see!”

The knight breaks into a sneer.

“That’s good. I planned on becoming stronger and getting payback for being put in exile. Learning that Issen-ryu will be just perfect.”

Yasushi freezes upon hearing the knight’s words.

“——Huh? Exile?”

“That bastard got angry at me for screwing around with the people a while ago. What a small-minded lord. I’ll get my revenge on him.”

Seeing an ominous smile appear on the man’s face, Nina grabs Yasushi’s arm.

“Yasu-kun, i-is this alright?”

“D-don’t worry. If he pays the monthly fee, he’s a precious student of mine. A-anyway, let’s have you become my pupil from today onwards. First, starting with etiquette——”

“Shit like etiquette is useless to a knight! What’s important is power, isn’t it!”

“You are quite right! Th-th-th-then, let’s start training immediately!”

“This sword art is something even that Count Banfield learnt, huh. I’m looking forward to it.”

For some reason, a villainous man has suddenly appeared.



There’s a man gazing down at Yasushi’s dojo’s opening from above.

——It's the Guide.

“Yasushi, I'll have you work for a while.”

By his side is Gudwar, an octopus in the shape of a human.

“That's the Sword God? He seems like a man without any strength at all, though?”

Gudwar had been looking forward to meeting the Sword God, but his head tilts quizzically upon seeing Yasushi.

“He's not strong himself, but he's the man that raised Liam up and two others. His specialty is in raising strong people.”

“That's good! Then, I'll send plenty of strong fellows his way.”

The two of them are interfering with Yasushi and calling vagrant knights with problematic strength to him.

Then, they plan on preparing vast numbers of Issen-ryu users and using them to confront Liam.

Both the Guide and Gudwar are of the same mind.

To take Liam down, bringing up swordsmen of the same Issen-ryu will be ideal.

The two sent before had failed.

But what if they sent huge numbers at him, even if they weren't perfect?

If it wasn't children this time but knights with a certain level of strength, it'd likely take shape quickly.

Both of them think so.

“Yasushi opened his dojo at a good time. I'll gather more and more villains around him.”

As the Guide lets out a vulgar laugh, Gudwar looks delighted, too.

“This will have interesting repercussions for my own country, but this clash of Issen-ryu users is looking to be quite enjoyable.”

Gudwar, who loves to see fights between the strong, lets his eight legs coil around each other in delight.

In a good mood as well, the Guide sends negative energy towards Yasushi’s dojo.

Villains will probably gather there, as if drawn in by the negative energy.

Borrowing Gudwar’s power, the Guide set out to proceed with the mass production of Issen-ryu-trained swordsmen.

“With my help, quite a number of wild men who’ve learnt the Issen-ryu will be trained up quickly, it seems. I’m really looking forward to it.”

“Blood will flow forth in the clash of the strong.”

In order to defeat Liam, who’d become way too powerful, Gudwar and the Guide prepare a vast number of villains with the knowledge of the Issen-ryu.



Switching to a different perspective at that moment.

At a different planet, Riho faces down a single swordsman.

The swordsman has drawn his blade, but Riho’s is still in its sheath. Her hand lies on its handle.

She makes a taunting motion.

“Just come at me already. You’re the strongest around here, aren’t you?”

Her opponent is a man with a tattooed face.

With a head shaved bald, he truly looks the part of an evildoer.

Such a man bares his blade at Riho, but his body is drenched in cold sweat.

All around the two are the fallen bodies of his henchmen that he brought along.

They're the mercenaries that'd been living off pirate money.

Being swordsmen and former knights, they're men of some repute.

It could even be said that the feudal lords' private armies would turn tail and run upon learning that they were coming.

The man calls out to Riho with his sword at the ready.

“Why the hell is the rumored Issen-ryu in such a place? You lot have only been going wild near the Banfield house's territory and the Gudwar Supremacy.”

The name of the Issen-ryu that Liam spread around had finally pervaded the entirety of the Empire's territory.

Riho snickers, putting her hand to her lips.

“We're just killing time.”

At those words, the man stomps forward, closing in.

The man was still a former knight trained in the sword; a tough guy forged in the fires of war.

Having done so and become a pirate knight, he then climbed his way to working in their personal guard.

He's a well-known swordsman in the underworld.

(Against such a little girl!)

I can't lose.

Thinking so, he swings down his sword, but only cuts through air.

His sword was certainly within striking distance of Riho.

However, the blade has snapped off with nothing left above the hilt.

Right in front of his eyes, he sees Riho playing around with the broken blade in her hand.

“Oh, how boring. If it's going to be like this, I'll be better off heading where Senior Disciple is at.”

“Guh!”

The man reaches for his holstered handgun, but at some point his hand has become severed from his arm.

“Wha!?”

Ignoring the shocked man, Riho discards the broken blade and places a hand on the handle of her katana.

She unsheathes it slightly, sauntering closer to him.

“I deliberately requested Senior Disciple to let me handle this since I heard there were strong fighters around, and yet... If it's like this, that homicidal maniac a while ago would be more preferable. I was able to enjoy myself a little with him, I think.”

“Homicidal maniac? Don't tell me, you're talking about Dorneal? ‘Six Swords’ Dorneal was done in by a little girl like you!?”

He'd heard that the ruckus-causing maniac had been killed by someone.

However, not once did it cross his mind that it would be by the hand of Riho, the girl in front of him.

“Six Swords? Ahh, he had such a nickname, huh. Since I’d heard he was a fugitive feared even by nobles and knights, I had some expectations, though.”

Dorneal was a cunning man.

Even being chased by the Empire, he continued to elude them while continuing to cut people down.

The man remembered one rumor.

That there’s a knight going around hunting villains.

It’s been a rumor around here for a few years running, but he’d thought that it was a flight of fancy from someone.

But, with the swordswoman in front of him being of the Issen-ryu, the Senior Disciple she’s referring to must be——

“Is Liam here? What Count Banfield doing in such a——”

The man’s words cut off.

Riho raises an eyebrow, showing her displeasure.

“Don’t you dare address Senior Disciple so casually.”

As her katana clicks back in its sheath, the man’s head tumbles from his neck.

At that time.

Riho receives a message.

A holographic window appears in midair, displaying Fuuka’s face.

□Really, how long are ya going to take?□

Seeing Fuuka’s displeased look, Riho tucks a lock of hair behind her ear.

“How noisy. It’s already over. More importantly, you’re done on your end?”

□Senior Disciple’s had enough. He’s letting Marie handle the cleanup, so he told me to call ya back, too.□

“He does seem like he’s had enough.”

There’s a small spacecraft idling in preparation to ferry Riho back as she leaves the area.



A thousand black ships are chasing down pirates.

The one commanding them is Marie sera Marian.

Formerly a female knight christened as one of the Empire’s Three Knights, she spent two millennia in a petrified state, swearing loyalty to Liam who freed her from that condition.

She sends out order after order as the commanding officer on the bridge of the flagship.

“This is Liam-sama’s wish. Don’t let a single one remain; destroy them all.”

The number of pirate ships is above two thousand.

The difference in forces is twofold, but Liam’s party had arranged for state-of-the-art ships to be prepared for the sake of this incognito vacation.

The ships under Marie’s command blow apart one pirate ship after the other.

The operator relays the pirates’ plea for their lives to Marie.

“Commander, we’re continuing to get offers of surrender from the pirates?”

The bridge crew make faces upon hearing that, as if in exasperation.

Marie declares her refusal with a slight smile.

“We won’t tolerate pleas for life from pirates. Liam-sama tires of it, too.”

Behind Marie, Liam lounges in the seat reserved for him.

At the start he’d gotten excited about hunting pirates for sure, but ended up losing interest once he realized how weak they were.

“Well, actually, they have some connections to some nobles. Upon knowing that it’s Count Banfield rampaging about, they’ve come to threaten us since it’s become bothersome.”

“——Ara? They have quite the decent pair of eyes and ears.”

The ships don’t bear the crest of the Banfield house.

However, it looks like they’ve sussed them out after acquiring some information.

Marie looks towards Liam.

‘What shall we do?’ is what she says with her eyes, but Liam answers bluntly.

“With my status now, do I look like someone who can be defied by some insignificant noble? If it’s someone from our faction, it’ll end with a bribe. We’ll just wipe them all out if they’re from Calvin’s. If it’s some fence-sitter, I’ll head out and show him how we do things here. Contact that pirate.”

“Yes.”

Once the operator displays the pirate’s face in the communication window, Liam makes contact with a brazen attitude.

“Which prick out there are you connected to?”

□Hehehe, that's a secret. If Count Banfield pulls back for us, we'll even let you go without incident.□

It seems like he thinks that Liam plans on avoiding a conflict between nobles.

Liam had once waged war against the pirate nobles, but he's currently the head of the gigantic faction propping Cleo up.

To be of the mind that Liam would be fettered by these countless obligations, they're clearly connected to nobility.

“Is that so. Well then, I'll investigate after I crush you all. That's enough from them.”

Seeing Liam move to end the communication, the pirate's jaw drops.

□Oi, are you serious!? Surely you don't know who we're connected to! You, even so, you're a noble!□

In contrast to the pirate, Liam's composure doesn't falter.

“It doesn't matter which. Whether they're enemies or on the same side, it's no trouble to me.”

The pirate makes a face of disbelief.

□Why is a great figure like you deliberately gunning for us? There's countless other pirate groups much bigger than us, aren't there!□

It looks like it never crossed their mind that they'd be targeted by the Banfield house.

Liam cracks a small smile.

“It's nothing to do with something like that. I just enjoy crushing you pirates like the bugs you are. You'll sometimes want to make a detour during a vacation, right? It's the same as that.”

□Y-you're killing us for that reason?□

“When you pirates pillage others, do you consider their feelings? ——Oi, cut the line.”

As the communication shuts off, Marie moves to Liam's side.

“A splendid performance befitting Liam-sama. This Marie is trembling with emotion.”

Seeing Marie blush with delight, Liam reacts with the face of someone seeing something questionable.

“Ah, that's right. More importantly, there wasn't anyone suitable, huh.”

Liam turns to regard Ellen, who's standing silently with a nervous expression.

Looking towards her as well, Marie seems to sense what Liam is intending to say.

“Ellen's opponent, is it? Shall we capture some pirates from around here?”

Liam shakes his head.

“That won't do.”

Hearing that, Ellen unconsciously makes a relieved expression, but hurriedly smooths it over upon realizing so.

But, it doesn't get past Liam.

Marie shrugs as well.

“It won't do to be relieved, Ellen. Be it swordsmen or knights, the act of killing someone is necessary after all. One only becomes fully-fledged through doing that.”

Ellen hangs her head.

“Yes. I-if there’s someone, I’ll do it right away.”

“Of course. If you can’t become fully-fledged, you won’t have the qualifications to learn the Issen-ryu.”

Receiving Liam’s strict gaze, Ellen’s expression worsens, as if imagining that she would eventually have to cut someone down.

It’s just that Liam has become the one in charge of deciding who should be an opponent for her.

And yet, without anyone suitable around, Liam has been unable to find anyone matching Ellen.

[1] – Dougi, or martial arts gi [[wikipedia](#)]

Rosetta's Guard

Three years have passed since Liam went on a training trip to polish the Issen-ryu.

During that time, vast numbers of ships are being organized on a grand scale at the Banfield house's capital planet.

The ones heading to the space fortress are Rosetta and Eulisia.

Behind them is Ciel.

Lined up within the dock of the space fortress are the ships procured from the Third Ordnance Factory.

The ships float in the zero gravity environment.

Her usual disappointing self is nowhere to be seen, maybe because her worker-mode switch is flipped. She seems like a different person entirely.

“We’re building up numbers with the current mainstream models, though they aren’t state-of-the-art.”

The original plan was to build up a small elite force, but they’re gathering numbers in order to grant Rosetta’s wish.

Eulisia has a sheaf of documents in her hands as she talks about the ordnance.

Her wish being to help people facing hardship like she used to, the knights gathered are fundamentally those in adverse circumstances.

Even the crew are similarly chosen from wandering folk who have no roads left to them.

Therefore, Eulisia confirms with her once more.

“We’ll be making Rosetta-sama’s wish come true this way, but is this really acceptable? Other than the flagship and its escorts, we haven’t particularly paid much attention to the appearances of the rest. Even the flagship itself is plain-looking compared to those from other houses.”

Even Liam made his flagship gaudy.

Rosetta’s Guard are frugal indeed.

“There won’t be a problem once we tweak the appearance to what’s minimally acceptable. Rather than decorate them lavishly, please emphasize practicality. I want this force to be of aid to those in trouble.”

Rosetta doesn’t desire a Guard that stands around for her protection.

The Guard is an existence to aid the people on planets in trouble.

“Darling is stuck right in the middle of the political struggle for the Empire. Since there’s naturally things he can’t get around to doing, I wish to make up for that somehow.”

“I understand your will, but it’s because of the scale of this.”

The ships don’t number in the hundreds.

The total number exceeds ten thousand, and is being increased even at this moment.

It can be reasoned that the number of people in hardship is vast, but more than anything, the Banfield house is already welcoming immigrants for the sake of territory development.

New pioneer planets are being settled one after the other.

Eulisia seems somewhat uneasy.

“It’s no longer at the scale of a protective detail. Liam-sama has acknowledged as much.”

It’s like Rosetta’s personal troops have suddenly just appeared within the forces of the Banfield house.

Even if Liam is at the very top of the chain of command, these troops are essentially controlled by her.

If a confrontation begins between the two of them, it’ll develop into a great problem.

Even if there won’t be any enmity between them, in the long term there’s a chance that a conflict would arise from those succeeding them down the line.

Eulisia is concerned about such an issue.

“We’ll propose to Liam-sama to eventually reduce the scale of the fleet.”

“I don’t mind.”

Rosetta replies immediately that it’s fine, but the one who looks unsatisfied is Ciel.

(It’ll probably be better for Rosetta-sama to capture the hearts of the people before too much time passes.)

Within the scores of people devoted to Liam, Ciel could be considered as the one who knows the truth about him.

That Liam isn’t the benevolent ruler that the world knows him by, but someone who professes to be evil.

Ciel is working alone behind the scenes as she doesn’t want to let Liam acquire any further power than this.

“Rosetta-sama, even if you build up the Guard, training alone is insufficient.”

“Ara, is that so?”

Rosetta, who didn't graduate from the military academy, planned on leaving such matters to Eulisia even though she herself had the knowledge to do so.

Eulisia looks at Ciel with eyes of suspicion.

However, as Ciel isn't entirely wrong, she doesn't reject her outright.

“Yes, training is just mere practice. You're not wrong about that since real battles are a different thing altogether. But, I don't think it will be good to move the Guard willfully. It'll be better to wait for Liam-sama's return and get his permission before doing so.”

Ciel contemplates, being countered with the sound argument that Rosetta shouldn't be willfully moving the Guard, even though she does technically own it.

(This person, she's usually disappointing and yet, at such a time! ...Ah, that's right!)

Ciel tries to convince Rosetta.

“Since that Liam-sama isn't around, the people pleading for aid have their cries unanswered. Rosetta-sama, now that Liam-sama is unable to take action, it's the perfect chance for the Guard to activate. You've gathered the Guard for times like these, haven't you?”

Being reminded about the meaning of the Guard's existence, Rosetta mulls over it a little.

“That's true. Darling is ‘working hard’, too, so I want to do what I can as well. Countless petitions are coming in, so I'll take the liberty of doing what I'm able to. However, I don't think I can deal with the important ones, though.”

Even if she moves the Guard, she can't quite go about it showily.

In order not to cause trouble for Liam later on, she's probably limited to things like disaster aid, even though she could do more.

She must avoid getting embroiled in small conflicts.

"Of course! Let's help out those in need!"

Ciel plans on increasing Rosetta's allies if things go well.

"That's right!"

Seeing the two of them brimming with motivation, Eulisia alone regards the scene with cold eyes.



Having left the two, Eulisia calls out to the espionage detail that should have been observing the situation.

"...Can you show yourself?"

She tried to call out to them, but she doesn't know there will be a response.

They might or might not be present.

But a masked female immediately pops out of Eulisia's shadow headfirst.

Eulisia screams internally, but manages to not make a sound and moves to the topic of Ciel.

"Is it really alright to let her be? That child, she's making use of Rosetta-sama's enthusiasm to plan something."

The woman who appeared is Kunai.

She's a person who was bestowed a name by Liam.

“Liam-sama’s intention is to continue observing her and to let her do as she wishes.”

“Really, I wonder what he’s thinking? Even the Banfield house’s military is complaining, you know?”

There’s even some generals in the military that regard the excessive scale of Rosetta’s Guard as a threat.

Similarly, Eulisia has been appealing to Rosetta to reduce the scale of the fleet for the sake of the future.

“The opposition from the military will be overcome with Liam-sama’s permission. ——As Klaus-dono is keeping them in check, there won’t be a problem.”

Klaus will deal with the problem.

Eulisia is reassured from hearing that.

“I’m relieved that he returned from the border. Without that person around, the dissatisfaction might flare up badly this time.”

“We will purge those in question if that happens.”

Kukri’s clan will eliminate whoever defies Liam, no matter their relation to him.

Eulisia breaks out into a cold sweat.

“Even so, you all are turning a blind eye to that child.”

“It is Liam-sama’s order after all.”

Saying so, the masked woman disappears back into the shadows.



On a trip to find Master Yasushi, we’re heading towards the next planet.

Having finished with our daily training, I converse with my junior disciples, still sweating from the exertion.

“What shall we eat today?”

It’s fun to go around touring various planets, but I’m starting to get bored of the food onboard.

I’m bored, or rather, I kind of want some sort of stimulation.

Different cuisines are brought before me each day and they’re all delicious, so I have no complaints there.

But, I want stimulation.

As I’m partaking in a full course meal everyday, I’ve started to become nostalgic for the meals I ate when I was poor.

I’ve tried stuff like ochazuke^[1], but I want to try other things, too.

“Well, not something extravagant. Do you have anything in mind? Something like what you were eating in difficult times.”

Since all of my requests will be granted, I’ll entrust it to my junior disciples.

Fuuka and Riho look at each other.

“Difficult times, meaning before Master took us in?”

“Since we were rummaging through raw garbage for food back then, I don’t really have many good memories about that time.”

——I’ve stepped on a landmine.

Normally, I’d just rebuke them saying ‘Don’t talk about something so heavy when I’m around!’ and that’d be the end of it, but I can’t say such words to my cute disciple sisters.

I've decided not to hold to my evil lord's creed when it comes to my Issen-ryu kin.

I did rummage through trash for food countless times before my death in the previous world, but I have no desire to experience that again at all.

"Think about the time after you were taken in by Master."

Riho contemplates with folded arms.

"Even if you tell me to think about what was delicious, being able to eat alone was wonderful."

Fuuka thinks, leaning backward with her hands on the back of her head.

"Isn't that the truth. Everything was tasty. Stuff like the lightly grilled fish Master made."

As both of them can't decide, I look at Ellen.

"And Ellen?"

"U-Umm. That—— There's nothing."

Seeing her eyes dart around, I see through her act.

"Don't lie to me. There's something, isn't there? Say it, then. If you don't, I'll have today's meal be made from everything you dislike."

"Hii! U-um, that is."

Ellen hurriedly moves to answer what her favorite food is, but it looks like it's difficult for her to give an answer as she glances at us.

She speaks with a strained voice.

"I want to eat Mom's cooking."

I've stepped on a landmine yet again. I do some self-reflection looking at Ellen's sullen state.

A child that doesn't even look ten years of age is on a training trip away from her home.

It can't be helped that she's longing for her mother.

Today's just full of failures.

"You two, is there nothing?"

I look to Fuuka and Riho for help, but both of them don't catch my intent at all.

"Anything's fine as long as I get to eat."

"It'll be helpful if you could throw up some images or videos, I think?"

Hearing 'Anything's fine' is the most bothersome.

As I stew about the topic, Fuuka seems to have pulled out one memory.

"Ah, I wanna eat bread."

"Bread? You mean with things like cream stew?"

"The very first time we met Master, he gave us some bread. It was cheap bread, but to us, it was the first time we tasted flavor."

Reminiscing about the flavor at that time, Fuuka looks nostalgic.

Riho has glazed over eyes and hands on her cheeks as she recollects her experience as well.

"The bread at that time was delicious, wasn't it. We were going to return the favor to the other scavengers that were coming to kill us, though. We met Master then. He received us with kindness, giving us bread to eat."

Fuuka tilts her head.

“Huh? Didn’t he come to our rescue?”

“It doesn’t matter either way.”

Wait, aren’t their memories of the encounter too vague? Nevertheless, they were considerably young when they first met Master.

They probably have a lot of mistaken memories.

However, they were yearning for bread that much, huh.

“Alright, let’s have the head chef make some bread. What sort do you want?”

“Sweetened buns!”

“I’ll have the ones with jam!”

Thus, what we’re having as a meal ends up being sweetened buns^[2].



On that day.

The head chef of the flagship Liam is aboard is waiting for the order to arrive.

Even among the chefs working for the Count’s house, preparing Liam’s meals is a grave matter.

It’s a given that one’s ability is needed, but on top of that, there’s stiff competition among the multitudes of chefs who comprise the most influential and most famous throughout the territory.

Such an excellent chef confident in his abilities is waiting for Liam’s order.

“Head chef, we’ve received Liam-sama’s order!”

Seeing his subordinate panic, he makes a stern face.

“Settle down! No matter what kind of cuisine it is, I’ll make sure it’s perfect.”

The head chef has gotten irritated seeing his subordinate’s flustered state, but he ends up cradling his own head once he hears what’s being ordered.

“U-um, he said to make bread.”

“Cuisine suitable for eating with bread? It’s somewhat vague, but that wouldn’t be an issue.”

“No, he asked for bread. Just bread.”

“——Hm? What the hell are you saying, man?”

Even if he was told that Liam only wanted to eat bread, the head chef will end up being troubled.

“Um, well—— He said to make sweetened buns.”

The surrounding chefs freeze up as well.

The chefs in the top of their respective fields from throughout the territory have just been told to make some sweetened buns.

“A-and, he said to use these as consideration.”

The pictures sent are of the kind sold cheaply everywhere.

The head chef is baffled.

“What is this? Is he testing my ability? Liam-sama is requesting to see how far I can go with this, isn’t he? It has to be!”

At the desperate-looking head chef’s words, the subordinate shakes his head.

“His command is to replicate it as much as possible and cheapen it.”

The surrounding chefs catch the head chef before he can crumple to the floor.

Then, he gives an order.

“B-Bring the ingredients. When given a command, I’ll reproduce it perfectly. E-even if said thing is a cheap-looking sweetened bun.”

Liam is a man who had his best personnel make cheap sweetened buns.



Once the sweetened buns arrive, Riho and Fuuka begin tucking into them with great relish.

“Ahhh, this is it. This!”

“It isn’t as tasty as the one from my memories, but this is what it’s like.”

Seeing the two of them happily eating, Ellen takes a bite, too.

She turns to me.

“Master, the cream bun is delicious.”

“That so. Eat as much as you like.”

“Yes!”

I’d been feeling apologetic for hitting sore topics with the three, but I have to seriously ask myself if it’s really okay for the cooking I’ve prepared as an atonement to be some cheap-looking sweetened buns.

It’s tasty but—— Isn’t there something off about this?

[1] – Ochazuke, or tea over rice [[wikipedia](#)]

[2] – ぱんぱん, things like melon bread or anpan. Cheap ones go for 100-200 yen

Evil Governor

What we've arrived at is the home planet of a lord under Cleo's faction.

I, who's visiting a viscount with one of the lowest positions within the faction, am glaring down the bridge of my nose at the prostrating man and his family within his opulent mansion.

"You've been acting quite shameless, haven't you."

The viscount trembles.

"P-Please excuse my impudence!"

"Don't think you'll be forgiven with just an apology."

"Hiii!?"

In our search for Master, we landed upon this swordsman purporting to be from the Issen-ryu who happened to be under his employ.

The man hailing from the 'True Issen-ryu' reproduced the essence of the art, the Flash, using devices.

It was cruder than a lousy magic trick, and after we expressly took the trouble of going to him, all we got was a "Impostors calling themselves the Issen-ryu? Go home already." in return.

Riho and Fuuka ended up blowing their top at that attitude, and urged us to march into the viscount's mansion.

Honestly, I'd approved of the viscount at the start.

On a planet with a severe gap in wealth, the common folk were being squeezed and the nobles were living in the lap of luxury.

Thinking ‘Now this is how an evil lord should act!’, and because he was a comrade in the same faction, I’d planned on notifying him about the fake Issen-ryu impostor in his retinue and leaving it at that.

And yet!

“Your knights and soldiers bared their weapons at us. Do you understand? You bared weapons at me, the head of your faction!”

“Please forgive me. Please forgive me, Count Banfield!”

Being part of an enormous faction together, I’d naturally wanted to deal with him in a pleasant manner.

I wouldn’t especially condemn him.

It’d be fine if he gives a minimum of cooperation, and it’d be even better if we could even join forces instead.

And yet in spite of that, seeing us, the viscount started saying ‘It’s impossible for the Count to be in such a place. They’re imposters!’.

With help from the impostor calling himself Master Yasushi’s disciple, he actually intended to kill me.

——Absolutely unforgivable.

Said impostor is sent through the doors of the mansion by a kick from Riho and Fuuha.

“Who’s calling themselves a disciple of Master Yasushi? I’ve never heard of the likes of you.”

After Riho sends another kick into the fake disciple’s abdomen, he apologizes with a face scrunched up in pain.

“F-forgive me, please.”

Stomping on the fake disciple’s head as he begs for mercy, Fuuka looks down at him with bloodshot eyes.

“An imposter himself is branding us imposters? Ya little shit, you’re slinging mud on not just our names or Senior Disciple’s but Master’s too. Don’t get cocky, you shitty hustler!”

The fake disciple’s head makes unpleasant creaking noises as Fuuka puts more strength into her leg.

I all but spit out at the viscount.

“Starting tomorrow, you no longer have a place in the faction.”

“I-I’ll be troubled with that. I beg of you, I beg for your forgiveness!”

“You can even go to Calvin if you want aid. You’re the one who bared weapons at me.”

“I had no idea that Count Banfield himself was on an incognito trip! If I had known, I wouldn’t have done such things!”

“——So? And? I have no intentions of forgiving you. If you don’t like it, you can go to war with me anytime.”

I’m acting like I have a lot of leeway, but I’ve actually investigated the viscount’s situation.

His economic strength, military power, and other matters, and—— This man’s a small fry.

That’s why he had entered the Cleo faction.

A truly hopeless house that the other factions didn’t even take notice of.

I can win with full certainty if we go to war.

If necessary, I could even win with the ships that I have with me right now.

The ships commanded by Marie are in the skies above, positioned to take out the viscount house at any moment.

The viscount cowers in tears.

It looks like he doesn't even have the energy to oppose me.

As I want to settle this issue and move on to the next thing immediately, I'll leave the situation like this.

It's a shame since I'd have bombed this place flat if I had the time, but it can't be helped.

"If you start acting cocky again I'll crush you for real, so don't you dare forget that."

Intimidating even the viscount's family, all of them nod rapidly with frightened faces.

Just as I thought, it sure feels great to oppress others with my fearsome strength!



At the Empire's capital planet, the prime minister is receiving a report from his spy concealed in the Banfield house.

Said spy is Serena, the head maid of the mansion.

He's communicating remotely, but the prime minister can't hide his bafflement.

"What is the Count even doing?"

He had thought that Liam would immediately proceed with the wedding after completing his nobility training, becoming a duke.

However, he hasn't made any movements at all since returning to his territory.

He had asked if he was focusing on improving the territory, but upon hearing the actual news, he started sweating unexpectedly.

Serena continues her report.

□I'd heard that the last thing he did recently was to head to the territory of someone in his faction and conduct an inspection within. He would expel them if he found them to be unbecoming a noble of his faction.□

“Thinking that he's done with his nobility training, he's gone on a trip to right wrongs in the world and polish his swordsmanship? Is the Count serious?”

The Cleo faction has come out on top in this vicious struggle with the Calvin faction.

Yet, the man who put such a faction together has disappeared from the heart of the Empire.

Without anyone exercising authority over said faction, Calvin's one is coming back to life.

However, Serena seems to be of the mind that it's not entirely bad.

□Carrying out inspections within the Cleo faction will likely make it better in the long run. In truth, I've heard that there are many territory lords that got their act together after hearing that Liam-sama is going around inspecting.□

“There's fear in knowing that the Count has come, too. However, I'll be troubled if he continues drifting aimlessly for a long time. How's the situation in the Banfield house's home planet?”

□Klaus-dono is stationed at the home planet and working to develop the territory.□

Hearing Klaus' name, even the prime minister regains his composure.

“I'd heard that he returned from the border with the Supremacy. Even if there won't be problems with Christiana replacing him, I honestly wish we could have let Klaus be in charge of the border indefinitely.”

□So even you have a high evaluation of him it seems, Prime Minister.□

“He's the right hand of Count Banfield after all. To think that such talent was still hidden out there, the galaxy sure is a vast place. It's to the extent that I want to appoint him to an important position and have him directly reporting to the Empire.”

The prime minister, too, has a high evaluation of Klaus and is desiring to appoint him as a retainer.

“I can only be envious that the Count is surrounded by exceptional talent. However, having too many is a problem, too. ——Serena, is there a chance we can poach Klaus?”

□I'll verify that discreetly.□

The prime minister moves to poach Klaus.

◇

“——It's strange. Something is strange.”

Klaus, the head knight of the Banfield family, is cradling his head in the office granted to him.

An invitation to become a direct retainer of the Empire has come.

And, they've even prepared an important position should he take them up on the offer.

In order to not damage relations with the Banfield house over his poaching, the Empire has prepared sufficient compensation.

Klaus, who had an important position pushed onto him by Liam and is having to resort to one way or another to get through each day, cannot believe his eyes.

“Me, a direct retainer of the Empire, when I’ve been struggling in my governing duties until recently? And with a great salary to boot? —Impossible. Absolutely impossible.”

With his responsibilities even now being way too much, Klaus excuses himself from taking up a position that’ll heap even more responsibility on him.

“This is the time to refuse them politely, I think.”

Klaus wonders in amazement why he’s been cornered with such a situation.

A knight barges into the office with Klaus in that state.

As it’s obvious who it is because they entered without even asking for permission to, Klaus heaves an exasperated sigh.

“Chengshi, I thought I’ve been telling you to ask for permission each time?”

Seemingly in ill spirits, Chengshi ignores Klaus’ words and gets straight to business.

“——I’m getting antsy. I want to fight something, so prepare some enemies for me.”

With Liam losing interest after her defeat by his hand, her sparring partners had been Riho and Fuuka.

However, those two have been brought out on a trip by Liam.

It seems like she can’t endure any longer with her cravings going unsatisfied.

“Again? Having said so a while ago, I’d supposed you’d have forced your way into the pirate subjugations.”

“Those pirates flee at the sight of the Banfield crest. They can’t act as stress relief.”

Seeing Chengshi’s bloodshot eyes, Klaus thinks.

(If I leave her like this, it looks like she’ll start fighting even her own comrades. I’ll be troubled if she starts causing a ruckus too, so shall I place her somewhere else?)

Klaus is struck with an idea at that moment.

“Within Liam-sama’s petitions are requests for pirate subjugations.”

“Pirates again?”

“Listen properly. Join as a mercenary, not as part of the Banfield house.”

“Why?”

“The petitioners are nobles from the Calvin faction. It’ll be disadvantageous for both factions if we work together openly. You, go lead that bunch of bloodthirsty fellows and join in as mercenaries.”

“Good. I’ll be satisfied as long as I can go wild. I’ve no interest in politics.”

Looking at Chengshi walking away, Klaus feels relieved.

(In truth I could have rejected her request, but Liam-sama isn’t around after all. It’s safer to push them someplace else.)

The bloodthirsty knights will be sent to the battlefield.

With that plan in mind, Klaus intended to chase them and Chengshi out of the territory.



Yasushi was in a pinch.

He sits formally in the middle of a small prefab being used as a dojo, surrounded by his disciples sporting frightening faces.

He shows only calm in his attitude.

“Truly, I didn’t think that Governor-sama himself would visit such a place.”

Yasushi has a gentle smile on his face, but he’s screaming internally.

(Why did such an important man come to my dojo! Don’t come hereeee!!)

In front of him is the governor of the planet Yasushi and his disciples live.

The man, tall and with a well-trained physique looking in his mid-twenties, has an impudent attitude as he looks at Yasushi.

“I’ve seen the demonstrations by your disciples. I’d thought of punishing you if you were imposters, but it seems like you’re the real deal.”

The menacing disciples draw closer to the governor, rather than Yasushi.

“Governor-sama has invited ya to become an instructor. Of course you’ll take it, won’t ya Yasujirou?”

‘Yasujirou’ is Yasushi’s pseudonym.^[1]

Yasushi is being addressed casually by his disciples, but he doesn’t utter any complaints. Rather, he can’t.

“You’ve given me a generous evaluation.”

“I’m convinced after seeing your disciples. You’re the real thing, aren’t you?”

The disciples here number thirty.

Having acquired the Flash, every single one of them is stronger than Yasushi himself.

With crude knights and the like, his disciples have ended up becoming comprised of fearsome individuals he couldn't hold a candle against.

Moreover, all of them are villains.

(How did things come to this? How is it possible that they managed to learn it in just a few years even though Liam and the two took decades?)

Looking at Yasushi, the governor brings out Liam's name.

"Formerly, Liam sera Banfield acquired the Issen-ryu, reviving his ruined territory and earning his current position. He used that power to rule the planet, ascending to become a fearsome man."

"——So it seems."

(I don't really get it, but let's just go along with what he's saying.)

Yasushi has doubts on whether that really was the case, even if he agreed superficially.

It's just that if he said otherwise, it seems like he'd ruin the governor's mood, so he keeps quiet.

"I'm from a count's house, with this planet in my territory. However, there are dozens of brothers in line before me. As a result, my position is being the governor of such a destitute planet."

The young governor bursting with ambition is thinking to follow in Liam's shoes and to climb to the top after mastering the Issen-ryu.

For young nobles, there's a kind of admiration for Liam's success in life.

The increase in the number of Issen-ryu impostors is also a result of the increase in people aspiring to be Liam, after all.

Yasushi looks at the governor.

“Hence, you’ll have me teach you the Issen-ryu?”

“That’s right. I’m not a man that will end with just this planet.”

(No, even if it is a destitute planet, it’s only because nothing can develop with all your extortion going on. That Liam brat attended to such matters properly.)

The governor in front of him is the main culprit responsible for obstructing the development of this planet.

His name is [Chester].

A man overflowing with ambition, a governor of a frontier planet born to a count’s house.

However, Yasushi has no right to refuse.

In any case, the man in front of him is the governor ruling this planet.

“Let me provide assistance, my limited ability notwithstanding.”

“I’m grateful. You’ll be my swordsmanship instructor starting today. I’ll employ your disciples as my knights from today on.”

Hearing that, the gruff men throw up a resounding cheer.

“We’re knights from today onwards!”

“Let’s climb to the top together, Chester-sama!”

“With the Issen-ryu, we have nothing to fear!”

Seeing his disciples act like that, Yasushi thinks.

(Why have things become like this?)

[1] – Lit. ‘Cheap, Junior’ or ‘Cheap the 2nd’

Righting Wrongs in the Land

“How many planets have we visited already, with this one?”

Yet another hideous scene awaits us on the planet we land on.

I walk forward, looking like a kimono-clad ronin as Ellen, Fuuka, and Riho follow behind me in a line.

The town we visit has no liveliness about it, showing the clear lack of skill of the governor in charge of the planet.

“Are all of them idiots who only know how to exploit the people and nothing else?”

At the start I’d thought ‘Ohh, they’re really doing it properly!’, but after seeing nothing but the same scene before me, I’ve started to dislike it as well.

Simple exploitation is second-rate or worse.

Seeing the faces of the citizens, Fuuka turns to me.

“Just as I thought, Senior Disciple is amazing.”

“What is it?”

“The faces of the people in Senior Disciple’s territory are different. Don’t they look alive? I’ve seen other planets but, how should I put it, everyone’s eyes look dead.”

Their eyes probably look dead because they understand well that they’re being exploited.

As I expected, second-rate lords are no good.

“My citizens are dumbasses that don’t understand that they’re being exploited after all.”

I’m even a little shaken at how foolish they are, but my management of the territory is far better than the governor of this planet’s.

Riho plays a game on her device as she walks.

“More than that, what are we really going to do? This time’s the last, isn’t it?”

The search for Master is ending with this run as well.

Amagi got angry after all.



“Young Master, how long are you going to prolong this trip?”

“I’m not returning until I find Master!”

Amagi, who takes care of me, did not remain in the territory. She’s currently in my personal room aboard my flagship.

She doesn’t believe that there’s any need for us to conduct the search ourselves any longer.

“It mustn’t do to leave all the affairs to Klaus-dono. Please return back.”

Against Amagi’s strong attitude, I never wanted to present any air of weakness, no matter when it was.

“Then I’ll go back just once.”

“——Please get your act together.”

Amagi stares at me with an expressionless face.

Her eyes have a look in them almost like she's chiding a selfish child.

I do understand.

“N-no.”

“Let's head back to the territory, and do our utmost to prepare the ceremony for your wedding to Rosetta-sama. Did you not want the position of Duke succeeded to you?”

“I only want the rank.”

“That's no good.”

“N-no matter what?”

“Young Master, please consider your position.”

With Amagi not giving way, I decide to make this one the last.

“I get it. The next one will be the last time.”

“Then, I shall contact the home planet with that in mind.”



——Like that, I accepted that this would be the end of the trip to find Master.

“I want to find a trail at the very least...”

Sighing, I head towards the Issen-ryu dojo of this place, our objective.

It seems like some impostor calling themselves the ‘original’ is here, and the pupils are reputed to be insanely strong.

The governor has employed them as his own knights.

Riho switches off her game and stretches.

“Hey, how about we settle how many of us are going next? After all, they’re only impostors.”

Fuuka and the others don’t believe the actual Master would be here.

“Master doesn’t seem like someone who would just take anyone in, so it’s an impostor for sure this time too.”

We’ve traveled to countless planets before this, and the ones we’ve run into were all impostors.

We never managed to run into other Issen-ryu users.

The Issen-ryu has three disciples at the very least.

Since Master has his own teacher, it wouldn’t be odd for there to be fellow practitioners out there.

However, we’ve strangely never run into any.

“I’d expected that we might run into other users, though.”

It’s not bad to have an exchange with fellow students of the Issen-ryu.

Riho seems to be getting interested as well.

“Other than Senior Disciple and Ellen, we’ve never run into other fellow students, have we.”

Fuuka has expectant eyes.

“I’m interested. Wonder what the other Issen-ryus’ like? Senior Disciple, what do ya think?”

Such a thing’s a given.

“Master was high-minded after all. Won’t they be similar? Maybe preferring to seclude themselves in the mountains and train, just not having been discovered.”

Even as we go about like this, our other fellow students are probably polishing their techniques.

It's a depressing thought.

After walking for some time and looking around at the state of the town, Ellen notices something.

“Master, that building is a little strange.”

“Hm? The color's certainly a little different.”

Taking a closer look, the color is different. The building has a diagonal line across it where the color differs just slightly, and it doesn't seem to be part of the design.

Fuuka looks at the ground, and Riho is observing the surroundings.

The townsfolk with lifeless eyes are looking at us in fear.

No, rather, what they're looking at are our katanas.

After I trace my fingers along the wall to check, I get the impression that it's from a repair job conducted after the wall was slashed.

“No way.”

Coming to the very end of our journey, we might have gotten a clue.

As I stand there thinking so, a child jumps out at me.

He holds a rock in his hand.

“Give my dad back!”

As the child hurls the rock towards me, Ellen steps out in front, cutting it in two.

Seeing that slash, Fuuka applauds.

“Splendid! Looks like Ellen’s already able to use the Flash, isn’t she?”

Riho has a hand on her katana.

“That’s nice, but you know. ——Throwing a rock at Senior Disciple, nobody’s taught you any manners, huh?”

They’re my bloodthirsty junior disciples, but they aren’t about to draw blades against a child.

I take a look at the reactions from the people around me while this is going on.

“Did you see that?”

“Are these people the governor’s knights, too?”

“Don’t get involved. You’ll be killed.”

I wonder why they’ve concluded that we’re the governor’s knights after looking at us? On top of that, Ellen is still green, but her slash shouldn’t be something that the average person could see.

They’re not afraid of Ellen, who pulled off an invisible slash?

I move up to the child who threw a rock at me.

“Oi, why did you throw a rock at us?”

“I-It’s because you took my dad away!”

I do get a little irritated at the kid throwing a rebuke at me, but his courage alone is worth praising.

Also, he’s an important piece of the puzzle.

Ellen glares at the kid.

“For someone to throw a rock at Master; unforgivable.”

“——So you’ll cut him down?”

Ellen averts her eyes with a shocked look at my question.

“N-no.”

As I thought, this child is too kind.

If she kills an innocent citizen, she’ll end up bearing an unnecessary wound in her heart.

On top of that, I’ve taken too good a care of Ellen.

Having ended up making her too strong, she won’t learn anything even if I send opponents from around these parts at her.

It’s become difficult to find a suitable opponent for her.

Looking towards Riho and Fuuka, I urge them to check the surrounding area for further clues.

“It looks like we’ve picked up the trail. You two, go ask around as well. I have plenty of questions for this kid.”

Both of them look like they want to say something, but they leave the area without a word.

I fix the boy with a sharp look, but seeing him trying to hold in his tears, I end up at a loss at how to deal with him.

“Boys are beyond me, you know.”

My child from my previous life was a girl, and Ellen who I’m taking care of is one too.

“I’ll forgive your crime of throwing a stone at me if you can tell me more about the situation.”

I bring the kid along a little forcibly, deciding to hear him out.



We head to the boy's home, which reveals itself to be a tiny apartment.

It's a world where mankind has launched into the stars, and yet the way of life here feels a little antiquated even compared to my previous life.

It's as if everybody's lives have been tightly controlled on this planet.

"Yasuyuki! Why have you thrown a rock at Knight-sama! My humblest apologies, Knight-sama. Please, I beg you, spare the life of this child alone!"

The name of his mother, who returned from her part-time job, is Nina.

Upon knowing that her child [Yasuyuki] had thrown a rock at me, she paled and started apologizing.

If not for the fact that I've decided to prioritize collecting information because there was some clue on this planet, I'd have had her head.

"In return for accepting your apology, let me ask you a few questions."

"Me? If it's something I can enlighten you about, then sure."

The mother is considerably haggard.

It should be related to Yasuyuki's father being taken away.

"Upon seeing me, your son told me to return his father to him. What's the meaning of that?"

The mother casts her eyes downwards, then looks back at us.

It seems that she's wondering how far we can be trusted.

"Relax. We're tourists. We only arrived yesterday."

As if maybe realizing that we had nothing to do with it, Yasuyuki hangs his head, whispering an apology.

Apparently, it was truly a misunderstanding.

Now having known our situation, the mother speaks in a grave tone.

“Some days ago, my husband was brought away by the Governor-sama’s knights.”

“This planet’s knights? Why was your husband targeted?”

“T-that is, well.”

Seeing his mother finding it difficult to speak up once more, Yasuyuki jumps to his feet, loudly declaring their circumstances to us.

“Dad was taken away by those ‘Original Issen-ryu’ men!”

“Y-Yasuyuki!”

The mother moves to stop him, but Yasuyuki doesn’t back down.

Ellen talks to me.

“Master, could the ‘Original Issen-ryu’ possibly be from the same school as us?”

“——There is a possibility.”

I’d checked that slash scar from the shop, yet there’s many things that catch my attention.

Are there Issen-ryu users different from us currently existing on this planet?

Yasuyuki pleads for our help as he wipes at his tears with his arms.

“Dad was—— taken by those men. They were saying ‘You bastard, you’ve been swindling us till now’ to him.”

“Swindling? Did your father do something wrong, if at all?”

The mother averting her gaze is a small reaction, but a reaction nonetheless.

I consider that his father had done something to the governor and was taken to him by his knights, but Yasuyuki denies it vehemently.

“Dad didn’t do anything wrong! He has many flaws, that’s true, but he’s a kind dad to me!”

“But if that’s the case, why was he taken then?”

As I wonder what the reason behind it was, what comes out of Yasuyuki’s mouth is staggering.

“Those men, they said something like they weren’t expecting the Sword God to be in such a place.”

“The Sword God!?”

Blood rushes to my head in an instant when I think that there’s a man daring to call himself the Sword God, besides Master. However, it becomes strange when I think it over properly.

There’s no traces of a swordsman about this room.

It’s truly an average home.

As doubts surface in my head on whether this place actually is a Sword God’s residence, Yasuyuki speaks up.

“Those men, they called my dad ‘Yasujirou’. My dad’s name is Yasushi, so I told them they had the wrong guy, and yet when I said so, they seemed to be in greater spirits than before.”

I’m on my feet before I notice.

Next to me, Ellen has gotten up as well and is looking intently at me.

I speak.

“Ellen, call Riho and Fuuka.”

“Y-yes!”



At that time.

Conducting their own investigation, Riho and Fuuka come to realize that there are knights calling themselves Issen-ryu on this planet.

Riho gazes around with a sharp look.

“I didn’t think that we’d run into fellow practitioners at the very end.”

Fuuka absentmindedly munches some dango as she walks.

“Yeah. Even so, ‘Original Issen-ryu’? Wonder how they’re related to us?”

Being the ones Yasushi handed the Issen-ryu down to, it was more or less inevitable that they would become curious about the relation to the Issen-ryu calling themselves the original.

However, Riho comes to a stop, a smile breaking out on her face.

“You should ask them yourself.”

Turning around, they see a man with a katana strapped to his waist.

Wearing a glittering kimono, he looks down on Riho and Fuuka with scorn, as if confident in his strength.

Behind him are more men that seem to be his followers.

Such men only seem up to no good.

“The ones sniffing around for us are you two? They’re some cute young girls, aren’t they.”

The men break into vulgar smiles.

The townspeople in the surroundings start to leave the area in a hurry.

As the streets become deathly quiet despite it being the middle of the day, Riho shoots the man a question.

“You, you’re Original Issen-ryu?”

“Indeed. I’m one of the high disciples of the Original Issen-ryu.”

A high disciple refers to one that excels in the art.

Fuuka bites the dango off in one gulp, tossing the empty skewer towards a trashcan.

“We’ve found our fellow students, huh. Though, having your henchmen come with ya here, how unrefined.”

‘Think about the impression of the Issen-ryu that you’re giving.’ Fuuka leaves that unsaid, but the high disciple crosses his arms.

“These men are my pupils. Each one of them are the young sons of nobles and merchants.”

Hearing that, Fuuka closes her mouth.

Riho raises an eyebrow.

“——You, you’re using the Issen-ryu for money.”

Hearing that he’s teaching the Issen-ryu to the wealthy, the two feel indignation rise up within them.

The fellow students they had high hopes for have kicked the intention of the Issen-ryu to the ground.

If that’s the case—— Then they’ll just have them atone in death.

Riho sends a Flash, drawing a surprised face from the high disciple.

But, sparks fly in front of his eyes.

Riho's Flash was diverted.

The pupils of the high disciple are shocked.

“Was that the Flash?”

“A-are these two followers of the Issen-ryu too?”

“I've never seen it before.”

Seeing his pupils in a panic, the high disciple rebukes them sharply.

“Don't get flustered! There's no way that a high disciple of the Original Issen-ryu such as I will lose. Little girls, I'll make you regret having me draw my sword.”

Riho's face is devoid of expression.

“You talk too much. Even if we're from the same school, you all have fallen considerably.”

Fuuka's eyes are bloodshot.

“——I'll kill ya.”

Suddenly, countless sparks fly in the space between the three.

However, because it's two against one, the high disciple is at a disadvantage.

“Kuh!? Their strength surpasses my own!?”

The high disciple is gradually being cornered.

However, both Riho and Fuuka close in on him in a rush.

As he leaps backwards, the surrounding buildings and ground are carved up in an instant from successive slashes flying in.

Fuuka looks up at the roofs of the buildings.

“All of these are Issen-ryu...!”

Atop the roofs are knights clad in kimonos.

All of them hold katanas.

Glaring down at Riho and Fuuka, they’re positioned to send more Flashes at them.

One of them calls out.

“Truly, I didn’t think that we’d find other Issen-ryu users out in the hicks. More importantly, can you keep up like this?”

The man glaring down at Riho makes her blood boil. The attitude he has is full of confidence in their victory if they were to fight in this manner.

“Fucking looking down on us. Every last one of you, I’ll——”

Fuuka cuts her off.

“Stop right there.”

Being stopped by Fuuka, Riho floods her with killing intent as if to say that she’ll cut her down even at this point.

“Haah? To run with our tails between our legs, that what you’re saying? There’s no way the Issen-ryu can turn its back to an enemy, right? I’ll kill you too.”

Even if they were raised as sisters, she’s fully resolved to kill her if she dirties the Issen-ryu name.

However, Fuuka doesn’t pull back her words.

“Senior Disciple ordered us to return right away. I told him what was going on, but he said to return even so.”

Being ordered by Liam to return, Riho decides to withdraw, even as blood rushes to her head.

“——I’ll definitely kill the whole lot of you.”

The high disciples give chase as the two of them vanish in an instant.

“Don’t let them run! Kill them!”

The Captive Yasushi

——Why have things become like this?

Yasujirou—— or rather, Yasushi, contemplates in his cell.

Yasushi, sitting in seiza^[1], has a composed expression as if to say that this was nothing out of the ordinary.

Across the iron bars from him is the governor, Chester.

“You’ve really fooled us all, Yasujirou. Or should I say, Yasushi.”

He had thought that no one would find out if he simply used a pseudonym, but this man is the governor.

After investigating the proceedings during his first arrival on the planet, he arrived at Yasushi’s identity.

It seemed like he’d done so just in case, since he had employed him as his swordsmanship instructor.

“I had thought you were the real thing after seeing your disciples’ moves, but I’ve truly hit the jackpot. You were correct to have me find out later. With you around, I’ll even be able to cut down a battleship like that Banfield guy.”

Liam cut down a battleship at the capital planet.

With the reality of that affair going around, word spread that against the Issen-ryu even a battleship would be cut in two.

Governor Chester wants that power for himself.

(What does cutting a battleship even mean!? That's totally out of the realm of human beings! Use your damn common sense!)

Anyone that can do something like cut down a battleship isn't human.

To Yasushi, Liam, Riho, and Fuuka are no longer humans.

However, because of Chester's excitement, he doesn't notice Yasushi's state of mind.

"I'll have you teach me everything. Starting with the Issen-ryu's innermost secret."

Even if he was told to teach him everything, Yasushi has already imparted everything he could possibly teach to them.

"Not only am I not the man referred to as Sword God, I've already taught you all that I can. What comes after is dependent on Chester-dono's diligence."

He tries to deflect in some way, but the man he's speaking to isn't Liam but Chester.

He lacks the strange grace and earnestness he has.

Because, he's an evil lord to the bone.

"——Yasushi, I dislike things like diligence. If there's a secret to the Issen-ryu, then teach it to me immediately. To me, martial arts is just a tool. I'll eventually take Banfield's place at the height of prosperity. It's a tool for that very purpose."

Looking at Chester's firm gaze, Yasushi can't help but break into cold sweat.

(No, that's not gonna happen! In this world, if you could get by with force alone nobody would have any problems!)

Can one win against the Emperor if they became a Sword Saint? Nobody would say yes to that.

Even though you've mastered a martial art, it doesn't equate to succeeding as a noble.

Furthermore, even from Yasushi's viewpoint, Chester and Liam are way too different.

It doesn't seem likely in the least that he would be capable of the same.

"No, that is, Chester-dono? If, as a noble, you want to live in the height of prosperity, then would it not be better to focus on other things besides the Issen-ryu? How about focusing efforts on the development of the territory?"

(That said, we're living in squalor because you aren't doing things properly! Work like a proper governor, damn it!)

Yasushi informs him that he won't obtain prosperity as a noble even if he masters the Issen-ryu.

Chester makes an exasperated face at that.

"This planet is managed by my parental house, so it's not my own property. Since that's the case, isn't it natural to extort as much as I can and increase my wealth?"

"Huh? No, no no, but however. The territory won't develop with the people being oppressed."

"Something like the territory will develop even if I set it aside. It'd be good if I can extract wealth from them without killing them or letting them live. Even if they did die, what about it?"

"Well! The people have lives, too."

"The citizens are nothing more than numbers! The word 'people' is reserved for the nobles. The citizens are no different from the insects crawling on the ground to me."

Looking at Chester comparing his people to insects, even Yasushi thinks he's no good.

However, something flashes into Yasushi's mind.

“What happens after Chester-dono masters a martial art and becomes the head of a count's house? If things continue like this, the territory will become ruined. In short, your future wealth will become diminished. It's important to treat your people with tenderness.”

Yasushi thought that he'd outdone himself saying that, but Chester goes above and beyond.

“The count's house is nothing more than a stepping stone. I'm aiming even higher after all. The citizens that are being stepped on for that sake should take pride in that instead. After all, they're contributing to my ascent to the height of my prosperity.”

Yasushi thinks, looking at the noble in front of him.

(A noble behaving just like a noble would, huh.)

An existence like Liam is nothing more than an exception among exceptions.

Chester speaks.

“The value of those that aren't nobles depends on whether or not they're useful to me. Those that aren't are nothing but garbage. Yasushi, do you treat garbage with kindness? You don't, do you?”

Looking at Chester not seeing people as human beings, Yasushi feels like he's looking at something fearsome.

(It's no good. Nothing I say is getting through to him.)

If it's like this then Liam would still be preferable.

That's what he thinks, but Yasushi is currently being held captive.

Chester threatens Yasushi.

“Yasushi, you have a family, don’t you? If you don’t teach me the secrets of the Issen-ryu, even I have a few plans in mind.”

“Wha-!? P-please stop. My family alone is...!”

As even Yasushi would hold his family dear to himself, he doesn’t have the leeway to keep up appearances anymore.

Chester smiles at the sight.

“Then, prepare a favorable reply before I come here next.”

He leaves with that.

Yasushi’s head droops as he sits in the cell.

(From the start, there’s no such thing like that! The Issen-ryu itself is just a lie I made up.)



Riho and Fuuka storm into the tiny apartment.

They’d been confronted with those fellow practitioners and it seemed like they were crossing swords, but were summoned back here against their will.

Riho is clearly resentful because of that.

“What kind of Issen-ryu is that, turning my back to the enemy. Fuuka too has gone soft it seems. Isn’t it better for you to die?”

“What the hell does that mean, huh!”

Seeing the thick tension between the two of them happening in this tiny apartment, Ellen looks for me for help.

I’m most likely the only one that can bring this to a close.

“Riho, since when have you started being able to spout complaints at me?”

“Gh! S-Senior Disciple understands too, right? I turned my back to the enemy in the middle of a fight! Me! Me, a disciple of Master, ran away from the enemy! Even if it’s Senior Disciple, I won’t budge on that!”

She pleads her case through teary eyes, even through her fear of me.

Riho’s anger is reasonable, too.

If I was told to run away right in front of an enemy, I’d absolutely refuse.

Fuuka seems to have followed my orders reluctantly, but it must be weighing heavily on her on the inside.

“Relax. We’ll kill them all.”

“Senior Disciple?”

“——That ‘Original Issen-ryu’ lot has kidnapped Master Yasushi.”

Hearing the facts from me, both Riho and Fuuka’s eyes open wide, their mouths snapping shut.

They’re probably too shocked to let out a sound.

“This planet’s governor seems to be a pupil of the Original Issen-ryu as well. He’s employed his fellow pupils as knights, and they’ve been making quite the show of rampaging around, looks like.”

I clap a hand on Fuuka’s shoulder as she moves to dash out the door.

She glares back at me with bloodshot eyes.

“Let go! I’ll kill the whole lot of them and get Master back!”

“Calm down. There’s a few things I’m interested in.”

I look towards Master’s wife Nina after pacifying Fuuka.

I sit down, straightening my posture, then ask.

“Madam, why was Master taken away by those from the Original Issen-ryu? If it’s Master, he should have been able to resist?”

At my questioning, the Madam seems troubled, becoming unable to meet my eyes.

“U-Umm, Yasu-kun—— My husband Yasushi, I believe he’s a different person with the same name. He isn’t strong after all.”

“Would you have any pictures or videos of the family?”

“H-here it is.”

Once she shows it to me, Master’s figure is surely reflected in those images.

Riho and Fuuka are in uproar.

“That’s Master! Does he look a little slimmer?”

“No doubt. That’s Master Yasushi. But certainly slimmer, or thinner.”

It’s been considerably long since I’ve met him face-to-face too, but Master certainly looks smaller.

I wonder if it’s because of some reason like my growth in stature?

But, it’s undoubtedly Master in those images and videos.

As the three of us lean in to look, Ellen shows a doubtful glance.

“Master, is this person really Yasushi-sama?”

“Of course! It’s impossible that we’d mistake Master for someone else!”

Not recognizing Master, there’s a limit to how much impoliteness my disciple can show.

But, Ellen is still doubtful.

“I certainly got the impression that he had learnt the sword, but his movements are strange. Is he really a martial artist?”

At her words that those aren't the movements of a martial arts master, we retort.

“You just don't understand Master's greatness! C-certainly, at first glance he might look weak. But, Master is my teacher, you know!”

Riho, too, explains to Ellen with indignation.

“He certainly seems weak, but he's my Master. Master, whose Flash is something we haven't been able to reach to this day, cannot possibly be weak!”

Fuuka is the same.

“Ellen, there's some things you can say and some you can't. H-he certainly looks a little weak. B-but, he didn't seem like that before.”

As the three of us look at each other in puzzlement, we wonder if something might have happened to him.

The Madam said that Master wasn't strong.

However, those Original Issen-ryu guys took him away.

Moreover, I'm also curious why Master had been going under the false name Yasujirou.

“——Anyway, there's plenty of things we don't understand. However, the facts are that those Original Issen-ryu guys kidnapped our Master. We'll make sure none of them survive.”

Hearing my resolution, both Riho and Fuuka seemed to have put away their rage at the moment.

Taking a seat, they look at Yasuyuki sitting next to the Madam.

Since they apparently look interested, I decide to give an introduction.

“This is Yasuyuki-kun, Master’s son.”

Fuuka’s curly hair blooms to life, and she makes a cheerful expression.

“Yasuyuki, huh! Any son of Master will be a younger brother to me. Ya can call me, Shishigami Fuuka, nee-chan!”

Riho then pushes Fuuka aside and makes her own introduction.

“I’m Satsuki Riho! I’ll be Yasuyuki’s onee-chan starting today, so you can rely on me!”

Both of them all but fight with each other to talk to Yasuyuki-kun, but the child himself looks troubled.

Ellen looks at the two with exasperation.

“That child had thrown a rock at Master, though?”

Is she still holding a grudge? Since it’s Master’s child, that much is forgivable.

“Ellen, such a thing never happened.”

“Huh? B-but...”

“I don’t remember anything like that. So, since there’s no crime, he’s not guilty of anything. Yup, this discussion ends now. More importantly, we should be focusing on Master’s rescue.”

Why had our strong Master been kidnapped by that Original Issen-ryu lot?

Ellen looks at me worriedly.

“It’ll become a fight between fellow users. Master, what shall we do?”

“It’s simple. We’ll just march into the governor’s mansion.”



At that time.

In his mansion, Chester’s knights report.

Since he had been training in the Issen-ryu, he listens to them while wiping off his sweat.

“What did you say? Issen-ryu users other than us appeared?”

“Yes. They called us fellow practitioners. But, they also said that fallen Issen-ryu such as us are unforgivable.”

“They called us ‘fallen’, huh. ——No, wait.”

Chester recalls the rumor that’s been going around recently.

The unbelievable rumor that Liam has been traveling to various places and punishing errant nobles.

At the start, Chester even thought that he was an idiot for going around punishing nobles.

It was impossible to think that Liam, presently the head of a large faction, would be taking such actions.

However, it was true that the evil lords and governors of various places had been punished, and even destroyed on occasion.

Even if it was just a rumor, one can only imagine that something was going on behind the scenes.

“Issen-ryu—— They were women, right?”

“Yes. As they were talking about a senior disciple and the like, we believe that there’s one more of them.”

“When it comes to a man of the Issen-ryu, the first name that comes to mind is Banfield or so. If that’s the case, then the rumors are true after all.”

Stifling a laugh, Chester predicts that Liam and his group would come marching into his mansion just like that.

“Get a line to the home planet. Tell my dear father that a chance has come to kill Liam.”

“Is that all right?”

“We’re from his Highness Calvin’s faction. Send a call even to the surrounding lords. If we kill that Banfield guy, his Highness will likely have a joyful memory. Fortune is favoring me, too.”

Chester makes a plan to turn the situation on Liam.

He draws his katana and swings.

Then, a log ten meters in front of him falls apart, even with his lack of experience.

“Taking down Banfield, I’ll reach the height of prosperity of nobles. There’s no reason that I can’t do what Banfield managed to do after all.”

Chester breaks into laughter at the thought of Liam coming at him.

[1] – Seiza, a traditional way of sitting [[wikipedia](#)]

The Governor's Mansion

At the planet Chester governs.

Behind a far-off moon, the incognito ships led by Liam lie in waiting.

They're currently being resupplied with material from the Banfield house.

The one who brought the supplies here is Thomas, their official merchant.

"I'm always astonished by Liam-sama's actions. However, with several interstellar routes secured, the number of planets available to us merchants to conduct safe business have increased."

The person that the happily beaming Thomas is talking to is Marie.

"As I thought, it's fitting for Liam-sama to be the true ruler."

Thomas pointedly ignores that 'true ruler' talk.

It's words that would trouble anyone hearing it.

"More importantly, when will Liam-sama be returning to his home planet? Even speaking for myself, I'll be troubled if he's absent indefinitely. His Highness Calvin and his faction are making various moves on the capital planet."

Even Marie is concerned about that.

"Didn't he lose his standing after the war with the Supremacy?"

"Even if he had, he's still his Highness the First Prince after all. Without Liam-sama around to exercise authority, he can freely move as he wishes at

the capital. The Clave and Newlands companies are also eagerly awaiting Liam-sama's return."

"What is his Highness Cleo even doing? Even without Liam-sama around, there shouldn't be any problems with him present."

It's essentially Liam's faction, but the one they're propping up is Prince Cleo.

Even if Cleo doesn't match Liam in prowess, he still has substantial authority.

It's precisely at this time where Liam isn't around that he would have a good chance to consolidate the faction and make a proper name for himself.

That Cleo doesn't do such a thing, Marie feels a little angry.

However, she reconsiders after hearing Thomas' next words.

"His actions are conspicuous, even for his Highness Cleo. He's gathering supporters from within his own faction. It wouldn't be strange if it was just that, but only powerless nobles are being gathered."

"——How kind of him to do so."

Marie narrows her eyes hearing that Cleo is buying favor by generously handing out money and the like.

She praises him outwardly, but she doesn't believe her words for a single second.

"It looks like he loves using the Banfield house's budget to donate to powerless nobles."

"Well, yes. He's drawn considerably from the budget, and is generously handing it out."

It might be possible to accept this as a necessity for succeeding the throne, but the ones Cleo is making friends with are nobles and knights without

much power if at all.

It'd be fine if he were moving to create his royal court, but using such people would make it meaningless.

By all rights, strong knights should be dispatched to the capital planet.

However, they're being delegated with the Banfield house's home planet and the border with the Gudwar Supremacy.

Knights with the ability to govern like Tia and Klaus are few in number, and even if they weren't, the vast Banfield territory is constantly in need of manpower.

"If only he would hold Calvin back like a good boy, we'd have peace in the future."

Starting to fear the irritated Marie, Thomas decides to change the topic.

"M-more importantly, have you heard about Rosetta-sama's Guard being active in various places?"

"I have. In order to support the places beyond Liam-sama's reach, she's gathered quite the considerable fleet. My word—— if she had only told me about her plan, I'd have arranged for an even more superior Guard."

Marie favors Rosetta.

Because of that, she's lent her a hand in various things.

She isn't by her side at the moment due to acting as Liam's escort, but she's helped Rosetta out with various things at her request.

"Rosetta-sama is also making a name for herself in the territory. Among the people, there are many who wish for her to get a proper wedding without delay, too."

"I want to say that's disrespectful, but even I'm of the same mind, you know. I had thought that Liam-sama and Rosetta-sama's wedding would

commence as soon as he finished his training.”

She won’t have peace of mind if Liam doesn’t quickly get married and have Rosetta bear his children.

The people had been wishing for that as well, but Liam ended up prioritizing his trip.

Only, the one who swore as such didn’t lend a ear to it.

“Nothing could be done no matter how much Bryan-dono and Amagi tried to persuade him, wasn’t it.”

At Marie’s sigh, Thomas hangs his head as well.

“Even for myself, I wish for Liam-sama to quickly get married, too. Is there no way to have it done?”

Marie shakes her head after thinking for a moment.

“There’s none.”

It could be considered one of his flaws, but Liam himself holds too much authority over the Banfield house.

That’s the main reason why nobody could stop this trip from happening, too.

He has the power and ability to back up his absolute authority, but at the same time, it also means that nobody can stop him from doing what he wants.

Marie checks over her outfit in the middle of the conversation.

“It’s the set time for the communication with Liam-sama. Thomas-dono, don’t say a word. This is my precious. Precious! assignment after all.”

Thomas nods, seeing Marie look excited for the regular communication with Liam.

Then, a small window appears in midair, displaying Liam.

“Liam-sama, it’s time for the re——gu——lar—— Hiiiiiii!!”

As Marie shrieks, Thomas gets horrified at the display, too.

“Liam-samaaaa!!”

Why even Thomas is screaming is because the display shows Liam in the act of washing dishes.

□What, even Thomas is here? More than that, I’m busy washing dishes so I’ll cut the line now.□

Marie moves right up to the display window in a panic.

“That’s wrong, Liam-sama! It won’t do for Liam-sama to be made to do such a thing! Liam-sama is this Empire’s—— Huh? Liam-sama? Liam-samaaaa!?”

The transmission was cut off.

Marie feels the blood drain from her face at the thought of Liam washing dishes.

“Noooooooo?!?!?”

Thomas plugs his ears at Marie’s scream.

◇

We were treated to lunch at Master’s home.

Not finishing the meal that the Madam provided would be absurd. Then after that, I moved to clear everything up.

“Sorry. I’m letting you do something like wash dishes.”

The Madam looks apologetic, but she’s also Master’s dear wife.

I can't be rude to her.

“Please don't let it bother you. I'm used to washing dishes.”

I've done it countless times during my training.

Since I was living alone in my previous life as well, there's no problem with something like this.

Looking at the rest of the room from the kitchen, I see Riho and Fuuka playing with Yasuyuki-kun.

“Yasuyuki, won't you call me onee-chan?”

“Do ya have anyone you dislike, Yasuyuki? Shall nee-chan cut them down for ya?”

Yasuyuki-kun flinchingly interacts with these two.

Hearing that he's Master's son, he's probably like a younger brother to them.

Ellen, who's like a niece to them, is also doted on.

But a younger brother is an existence above that.

Ellen looks at them with a displeased face.

“You two, have you forgotten that we'll be marching into the governor's mansion tomorrow?”

Riho, lying down on her stomach, flops over to face Ellen.

With a ‘and then what?’ smile on her face, she talks about tomorrow.

“Deciding that we're marching in is enough. What we're going to do hasn't changed.”

“Our opponents are fellow users, you know.”

“That’s where you’re wrong. They’re a bunch of fallen Issen-ryu. They don’t deserve any right to call themselves that.”

Fuuka adds on to Riho’s words as well.

She’s giving Yasuyuki-kun a piggyback ride.

“That’s right. ——Even if we end up losing, that just means that we were weak.”

The weak aren’t able to carry out their own righteousness.

Our plan to march into enemy territory is also for the sake of demonstrating that we were in the right.

And, with our blades, we’ll make all of them admit it over their dead bodies.

Finishing up the dishwashing, I continue the conversation as I dry my hands.

“I’ll contact Marie later. We’ll protect Master’s family, then march in first thing next morning. You all get ready too.”

Riho and Fuuka’s looks sharpen, and their lips curl into a slight smile.

Their blood must be pumping hard.

Until now we haven’t run into any strong enemies, but even if we call them ‘fallen’, our opponents this time are fellow Issen-ryu.

Even my heart thumps in place.

“Those bastards laid a hand on our Master. Since it’s him, he should be okay but—— Do things properly until we take all of them down. Keep your playing around in moderation.”

My heart thumps, but at the same time, I feel anger well up in me at Master’s kidnapping.

I want to have my fun, but I'll also teach them properly which of us is superior.

Seeing the three nod, I'm satisfied.

——The price of my lesson to those Original Issen-ryu fools will be their lives.



Gudwar and the Guide are drinking from wineglasses from their perch atop a tall building.

The glasses are full of the citizens' blood.

To be accurate, it's the blood of the citizens tormented by Chester.

The two anticipate seeing the best show as they drink in the negative energy.

“Hm~, the almost-ripe negative emotions are to my liking, but this youthfulness is fine too. The man Chester has good points about him.”

Truly a villain.

An unmistakably evil governor.

That's the man known as Chester.

Without seeing his citizens as human beings, he torments them with heavy taxes.

They're killed not only if they defy, but also at his whim.

Such a man has been conferred the Issen-ryu by Gudwar and the Guide.

Gudwar is in great spirits too.

“After Chester’s knights are brought up, I’ll turn them towards my country to be their fodder. I’ll be able to bring up warriors that surpass the Issen-ryu.”

The two of them don’t even acknowledge the Issen-ryu sword art, which sprung up all of a sudden.

To put it bluntly, it’s an “outrageous sword art” that suddenly appeared.

There’s nothing at all like it in the long annals of history.

It’s something Gudwar isn’t interested in, and even from the point of view of the Guide, it’s a sword art that’s a source of torment for him.

It’s absolutely unforgivable, and he’d much rather see it stamped out at the roots.

“I don’t mind. If they’re able to kill even Liam, I’ll have no complaints at all. Even so, this place is fine. Negative emotions are roiling about.”

The Guide lets loose a sigh of relief.

Relief, bliss, and various other emotions are mixed in that sigh.

Gudwar looks at his glass.

“Chester’s family are quite the villains too, after all.”

“After Liam dies, I should even lend my support to them. I’ll turn the Empire to shreds from the inside out.”

The Guide wants Chester to snatch everything from Liam’s hands.

With the power gained from snatching away everything Liam built up, he’ll usher in a new dark age for the Empire.

Imagining the surge of negative emotions, the Guide finds himself breaking into a big smile.

“Now, a cheer to Liam’s death!”

“——Why are you acting like you’re in charge? Gathering the villains and having the Issen-ryu taught was all me, wasn’t it?”

“Huh? Ah, yes.”

The currently-weakened Guide can’t take a firm stance against Gudwar.

He can only influence Gudwar from the side while reluctantly following in his footsteps.

As the Guide waits on Gudwar’s mood, thoughts surface in his mind that make his blood boil in rage.

(This happening is Liam’s fault as well! By all rights I should be an existence above Gudwar’s and yet, to think that now I can only kowtow to him to defeat Liam!)

The Guide has his pride in tatters, but he endures for the sake of defeating Liam.

(I’ll definitely make sure you die, Liam!)

Burning with the desire for revenge, the Guide can’t help but anxiously await the next day.



At that time.

Chester is contacting his father, the head of the count’s house.

□Liam is still in your planet of appointment, isn’t he?□

“Yes, Father.”

With a smile plastered on his face, Chester waits on his father’s mood, taking an inferior position.

It's all for the sake of getting to the top.

At this point, he'll even lower his head to his father.

□The troops' preparation is complete. For them to come flying into the enemy's bosom with a mere thousand ships, they must only be growing arrogant from winning too much.□

“How many forces have been gathered?”

□Including the surrounding lords, I've sixty thousand ships. Our house is coming up with thirty thousand.□

“——Thirty thousand, huh. That is splendid.”

But, Chester clicks his tongue in his mind.

(Though there isn't much time, gather more than that you shitty father. However, for this guy, it's quite the effort isn't it. Our ships are mere decorations after all.)

The surrounding lords are much the same.

However, there's a difference in strength from having sixty times the number as well.

Even with Liam having turned the tables no matter how outnumbered he was before, he won't be able to do a thing against this gap in strength.

It looked like Liam ended the war with the Supremacy by taking down its head general, but Chester's father leading the operation won't be heading to the frontlines this time.

(I'd wanted more forces to be gathered if possible, but this much is tolerable.)

Liam already has no place to run.



The next morning.

The four of us are in front of the governor's mansion.

Despite the ruined state of the territory, an unbelievably prominent mansion has been erected.

By all rights I should praise him, but I'm in a terrible mood right now.

"You all, are you ready?"

Fuuka grins, but her eyes are bloodshot.

"Any time! I'll dye this place in their blood and get Master back."

Riho makes a chilling smile.

"The lineage of the Original Issen-ryu ends today. What remains will be our Issen-ryu."

The spirit they're showing, that even fellow Issen-ryu won't be forgiven if they antagonize us, could even be considered a form of reliability.

The two of them have grown, huh.

However, Ellen alone seems nervous.

I call out to her.

"Ellen, it's your first battle, so don't leave my side."

Fuuka and Riho only spare Ellen a single glance as she hurriedly lowers her head saying 'yes'.

They seem to be thinking that Ellen can be left to me and they'll have free reign to kill their enemies.

I cut the giant, thick front door down with a Flash.

“——Let’s go. We’re barging in.”

Original Issen-ryu

The thick, heavy door is blown off its hinges.

As the four of us stride into the mansion, what lies in wait for us are defense drones.

We throw in Flashes against the lasers that they shoot.

The governor's mansion begins to be torn apart, with the courtyard trees and walls being carved up by our slashes.

Spotting a sniper hiding on the roof, I cut down the bullet he fires at us.

“They were ready for us, huh. Their ears seem to be pretty good.”

As we stroll further forwards, we don't see any noncombatants.

It looks like they've evacuated beforehand knowing that we were coming.

In exchange, the ones deployed here are the soldiers and personal guards.

Seeing them appear at the windows with weapons in hand, Fuuka lets loose a Flash.

The soldiers and guards are cut down as soon as they appear. As they fall, Riho speaks.

“Senior Disciple, I'll be heading this way.”

She points at the mansion's right wing.

Fuuka draws one katana, levelling it at the left wing.

“This way looks good.”

I feel the presence of the Original Issen-ryu disciples beyond that point.

Once we split up, they’ll probably make their move.

“Do as you like. Provided that you inform me if you see the instructor of the Original Issen-ryu.”

Fuuka makes an uninterested face.

“Who wins first gets priority, doesn’t it? I wanna take him out, too.”

Riho agrees with her opinion as well.

“Senior Disciple is always unfair.”

That’s right, I’m an unfair man.

“And what if I am?”

I smile at the two, and they look away.

Getting their acknowledgement, I head further into the mansion, taking Ellen along with me.

“Those ‘Original Issen-ryu’ trash, I’ll carve the real Issen-ryu into their bodies.”



Gudwar and the Guide gaze down from above at Liam and his party marching into the governor’s mansion.

“And so the show begins.”

The Guide raises both arms wide, inevitably ecstatic that Liam jumped into a trap of his own volition.

Perhaps Liam was thinking of overcoming it through brute force.

However, his enemy's giant army is currently bearing down on this location.

Even if he cuts his way through the mansion, Liam is still a rat trapped in the bag.

Gudwar is joyous at the battle between Issen-ryu users.

“Fight. Bleed all the more. Battles are my form of entertainment. Your reason for existing is to entertain me with your lives hanging on the line.”

Gudwar, who sees humans as nothing but entertainment, has a keen interest in how Liam will go out.

The Guide is fine with anything as long as Liam dies.

“Nowhere to run, Liam. Today is the day you die!”



Fuuka strolls within the central courtyard of the governor's mansion.

After separating herself from Liam and the others, she walks forward while taking on the drones and guards that come attacking.

The scene of her enemies flopping to the ground as she merely walks is probably something incomprehensible to the average person.

Then, she comes to a stop just as countless Flashes land centimeters from her feet.

The ground is slashed and gouged.

As she looks upwards, she sees the pupils of the Original Issen-ryu perched on the roof.

Among them is one of the high disciples they met before.

“You really came marching in? You lot must really be idiots.”

The pupils of the Original Issen-ryu roar with laughter.

Fuuka curls the corners of her lips into a slight smile, then carves the air around her with Flashes from her two katanas.

But, her opponents are fellow users.

They receive those Flashes with their own, and she doesn't manage to take a single one of them down.

Fuuka isn't surprised at that.

The Original Issen-ryu pupils are convinced of their victory after seeing that.

In any case, there's ten of them.

Even if each one of them is inferior to Fuuka, the gap in numbers is overwhelming.

The high disciple smirks, looking at Fuuka.

“You who lack numbers, it seems like you don't know the basic folly of splitting up. Or could it be that you're proud of your strength, not having met your match until now?”

Being accused of arrogance, Fuuka silently draws her two katanas.

She adopts a stance.

The Issen-ryu is a school where stances don't exist.

Seeing a suspicious expression develop on the high disciple's face, Fuuka grins in spite of her disadvantageous situation.

“You trash sure talk a lot. Come at me already, ya punks!”

Sending out Flashes into her surroundings, the pupils move to defend against them as they did earlier.

However, a few are cut down in sprays of blood, having been unable to defend properly.

As the high disciple looks over in shock, he realizes that their katanas have snapped in two.

He grits his teeth as he turns back to Fuuka.

In comparison, Fuuka has a dissatisfied look on her face.

“Only three? That’s less than I expected.”

Seeing Fuuka take up a stance once more, the high disciple turns to his comrades and yells.

“Go at her together! Don’t let her fight back!”

Fuuka gives a savage grin seeing her enemies get serious.

“Ya should have done that from the start.”



Another place.

A lone man comes walking in Riho’s direction.

“Only one person on my end? Looks like this direction was a bust.”

Seeing Riho look disappointed that only one person is going to be her opponent, he introduces himself.

“I’m the top disciple of the Original Issen-ryu. Could you not lump me together with the other rabble?”

The stern-looking man calls himself the top disciple.

Riho takes a slight interest.

She sends a Flash at him, upon which it's batted away by one of his own.

Sparks fly in midair between the two of them, only closer to Riho.

Riho is the one being pressured.

"It looks like you weren't bluffing about being the top disciple."

"Well done for a little girl. I'll even let you be my disciple if you want."

Riho loses her cool at the man's invitation.

With her billowing navy-blue hair and calm air about her, Riho gives the impression of a prim and proper lady.

As Fuuka prefers a flashy look, she ends up contrasting with her.

However, Riho is the one who is more easily swayed by her feelings.

Emotion vanishes from her face.

"Don't get cocky, you piece of shit."

Releasing waves of bloodlust, Riho's hair wavers slightly.

The atmosphere within the mansion freezes in an instant.

Even with that scene, the top disciple is fully composed.

After all, he's confident in his own strength.

"Even though I'd thought of making you my lover since your appearance is decent, it's a shame."

Sparks fly amidst the two once more.

They're mutually sending Flashes, clashing with each other.

The corridor of the mansion becomes riddled with scars, and the windows explode in a shower of glass.

Even the walls, ceiling, and floor begin to be carved up by their blades.

As the top disciple takes one step forward, Riho takes one step back.

Seeing that, the top disciple furrows his brow.

“Whoever defies me will not be forgiven. Even if you’re but a little girl, prepare yourself.”

As he steps one foot forward, Riho steps one foot back.

Her expression grows grim, and cold sweat runs down her face.



I stop right in front of the large door.

“Ellen, wait here.”

“Master?”

“——Nineteen. Considering the numbers Riho and Fuuka are facing, the last person further in’s the governor then? Leave this area, Ellen.”

“B-but!”

“You’ll be a hindrance as you are now.”

Ellen hangs her head at my glare, and runs from the area.

Watching her retreating figure, I can’t help but think I’ve said too much.

——I don’t have leeway at the moment after all.

Sensing strong presences of the Issen-ryu, I push the doors open and stride inside.

Waiting at the ready are nineteen pupils of the Original Issen-ryu.

The large door makes a sound as it shuts, and I hear a heavy mechanical noise right after.

It looks like they've locked it.

“You’ve done something unnecessary.”

Something like a door can just be blown away with a Flash, and despite that, they’ve... I don’t understand what the point was in locking me in.

Looking to the front, multiple men walk out to face me.

This bunch seems stronger than the rest.

“Welcome, Liam-dono.”

“You will address me as ‘Liam-sama’.”

I don’t even want to lay eyes on something like fallen Issen-ryu.

The other pupils get angry at my attitude, but the three in front are different.

They’re smiling.

“Do excuse us. We’re the high disciples of the Original Issen-ryu. We’re fellow practitioners like yourself. As our senior, we’ll show respect.”

I don’t like how their faces are showing their inner thoughts of being superior even so.

“Enough with this bothersome talk. Why aren’t you coming at me?”

The high disciple makes a wide smile, and brings a deal forward.

“It’s simple. Will you conduct business with us in exchange for keeping your life?”

“——I’ll at least hear what you have to say.”

“Our lord the Governor aspires to be like Liam-dono. If you’re willing to join hands, he’d be willing to let you run from here. Well, you’ll be working for Governor-sama for the foreseeable future, though.”

He’s aspiring to be like me? That truly is of great interest, but he’s got a lot of nerve if he thinks he can help me.

On top of that, I’ll be under him?

——The likes of a damn governor shouldn’t get cocky.

“Out of the question. Release Master right away.”

“Not a chance. We made to deal, but our position is overwhelmingly advantageous.”

“What?”

Against enemies that are confident that their position is superior, I feel my rage begin to well up.

The high disciple chatters on about the situation.

“More than sixty thousand ships are gathering around this planet. All of them are ships from lords belonging to Calvin’s faction, that’s why. We’re looking forward to seeing what happens to you once we hand you over.”

In my mind, I’ve decided how to deal with this bunch.

“Is that so. Then, I’ll just take you all down here and rescue Master. That’s all there is to it.”

The high disciple shakes his head.

“It seems negotiations have broken down.”

As one, the pupils of the original Issen-ryu send Flashes at me.

The room they've arranged is merely scarred from the attacks, maybe because it's made from a particularly sturdy material.

Flashes are sent right next to me as well, etching lines across the floor.

"It's quite the spectacle to have nineteen men slash at me with intent to kill."

Invisible slashes.

Attacks from a school that prioritizes killing over flashiness—— Scars from such attacks carve their way all over the entire room.

The high disciple smiles widely at me.

"Can you keep up, I wonder?"

"Of course."

Flashes are sent in succession at me as I dash forward.

The spot I was at moments before is instantly marred with scars, and I run around the room evading.

Sparks scatter around me as I return the slashes about to hit me with my own.

With sparks blossoming in the places I passed through, it must make for some bizarre imagery.

Seeing me like that, the high disciple ridicules me while laughing.

"You won't win by just running away! The power that took down a Sword Saint is no big deal, it seems!"

I've known prior that opponents of the same school would be difficult.

But, to think they would be this troublesome if they gathered together.

Each one of them is nothing like Riho or Fuuka, but even so, with nineteen of them around I'm feeling danger on a level I've never had before.

“Tch!”

Evading their attacks, I dash up a pillar, leaping off and running along the wall.

The feeling's even as if I've become a ninja.

Each person is sending as many attacks as they like at me, but I'm having my hands full countering them.

It's overwhelmingly disadvantageous in my favor now.

As I continue running around the huge room, my surroundings become full of scars.

The pupils of the Original Issen-ryu see me as a joke.

“So this is the fearsome Liam!”

“He's proving that we're the stronger ones.”

“The Original Issen-ryu is the strongest sword art! We'll take Liam's head as proof!”

“I'll be the one to take Liam's head!”

“No, I am. With his head, I'll be handsomely rewarded by Governor-sama after all!”

They start to bicker over who gets to kill me.

Despite knowing it's no more than a reward from someone the level of a governor can prepare, the number of idiots aiming to take my head for that pittance amazes me.

I begin to notice cuts in my kimono opening up.

“I'm easily cornered even by this, huh.”

Dislike grows in me at my lack of strength.

I can't master the Issen-ryu this way.

As I draw my katana and slash at one of them, I get a sense of discomfort at his movements.

The man who received my attack looks considerably panicked.

“Hihih!?”

The enemy looks fearful, but I leap backwards seeing as Flashes from my surroundings could come flying in at any moment.

As I dash away immediately, the high disciple jeers at the one that I slashed at.

“What are you doing, you disgrace!”

“I-I'm sorry!!”

A swordsman that can throw the Flash easily has his posture broken when an enemy closes in? They think they're stronger than me and yet, is that even possible?

Doubts surface in my mind one by one, but unfortunately I'll have to set them aside and focus on this battle.

“Just a little. Just a little more.”

My breathing worsens as I approach my limit.

My body is screaming out as well.

Jumping through the rain of Flashes from the enemy, I manage to evade them by a hair, but my clothing takes damage.

A shallow cut opens up on my cheek, drawing blood, but I pay it no attention.

“A little longer. Just a little bit more——”

Tired of waiting for me, who can't even take down an enemy, they fan out to surround me with attacks.

Being unable to counter all the attacks thrown at me from four directions at once, a wound opens up on my body.

Then, one by one, the enemy's Flashes begin to land on the mark.

I haven't seen my own blood fly like this since those days undergoing severe training with Master.

I hear voices from around me.

"We did it! We defeated Liam!"

"Not yet! His wounds are shallow."

"No, he's surely unable to move anymore. I'll take his head."

Blood flowing and down on one knee, I feel my consciousness slipping.

Memories of the days being trained mercilessly come to my mind.

Master Yasushi's face appears unbidden.

He says something to me with a smile.

"That's right. Back then——"

There's some words that Master Yasushi bestowed to me.

During the time where I was doing nothing but training, to become capable of releasing the Flash.

I had gone to Master to ask him what exactly I should do to make myself able to throw a Flash like he could.

Only, instead of teaching me how to, he taught me something different.

□Liam-dono, it's important that you pause and contemplate at times.□

I was puzzled.

□To pause and contemplate, Master?□

□That's right. There isn't only one truth out there. Everything will take different forms depending on how you look at it. It's the martial way to doubt in what you've believed in and then change it for the better. At times where you're stuck, first doubt yourself.□

□Doubt myself, Master?□

□That's right! First, doubt yourself! Right? Right!□

Remembering memories of my time with Master, I feel the flow of time around me slow down.

Doubt? Myself? In my Issen-ryu?

I, who've never been able to surpass Master; surely, haven't I been mistaken about something?

In the first place, haven't I been mistaken from the start?

“No way—— From the very beginning, Master hasn't been drawing his blade?”

In the instant I realized the truth.

An enemy has come up to me with his katana swung high, ready to bring it down on my neck.

At the same time, an electronic voice from the training armor under my kimono sounds out.

□The training armor has exceeded its limit. Beginning forced purge.□

Freed of the burden I'd been carrying until now, I cut down the Original Issen-ryu pupil close to me without a Flash.

The high disciple and other pupils are shocked.

However, I get to my feet, looking up at the ceiling.

“The truth is cruel.”

I’ve realized the truth of the Issen-ryu.

Liam's Enlightenment

Riho, fighting against the top disciple, is cornered right up to the wall itself.

Part of her long, attractive hair has been shorn off, and her clothes are stained with blood.

The top disciple gives a bored face at that.

“This is the Issen-ryu said to be the strongest? Weak, it's too weak. As I thought, it's not that you're strong, but that the Issen-ryu itself is amazing.”

Riho continues parrying the Flashes sent by the top disciple in silence.

Then, the top disciple realizes.

“For the propagation of the strongest school, I alone am sufficient. After I kill Liam and you all, I'll kill everyone else who knows of the Issen-ryu and claim its name for my own!”

He proclaims so with the intention to kill even the governor and take this strongest sword art for himself.

The top disciple probably intends to kill Riho off, then move to implement his scheme.

He steps in deep and releases a Flash.

But, at that instant.

Riho steps out as well, walking past the top disciple.

Astonished that his own Flash hadn't reached Riho, he turns around in confusion.

Riho heaves a small sigh.

“I've been observing your movements, but to be blunt, they're disappointing. Moreover, to be someone that dislikes when others stand above him—— What a small-minded man.”

“What does someone struggling against my Flash even have to say!”

Riho fires a Flash, cutting a wound open on his cheek.

The top disciple touches a hand to the wound. It's superficial.

However, it seems like he's understood from that one attack.

He starts trembling.

Seeing him like that, Riho hangs her head in disappointment.

“I wanted to find out in what manner the Original Issen-ryu developed, and yet it seems like it truly seems like you can't use anything besides the Flash. Just about everything is insufficient, and your Flash lacks clarity, too.”

Only the Flash.

That it's a school that abandoned everything else and learnt only the Flash—— Riho understands as much.

Turning towards the top disciple, Riho adopts an iai stance.^[1]

He readies himself in a panic, but in the next instant, he falls to the ground in two vertically-bisected halves.

Riho looks down with cold eyes at the top disciple's body as the blood pools.

“A fallen Issen-ryu should just disappear.”

Uttering so, Riho walks off the scene.



Fuuka's clothes are in tatters and her body is covered in wounds from battling it out in the central courtyard with the pupils.

In the middle of being surrounded by seven men and rained with Flashes, she continues fighting with a grin on her face.

The high disciple is taken aback at that sight.

“Why is she able to evade!? Why won't she fall!”

It's inevitable that he finds it strange that Fuuka doesn't go down even though they have the numbers.

But, Fuuka had noticed while fighting.

If Riho is the type to calmly analyze things, then Fuuka is the type to wildly learn by feel.

“You lot, ya really can't use anything besides the Flash, huh.”

The pupils' faces wrinkle at being suddenly ridiculed by Fuuka, and they put more strength into their arms.

The Flashes are thrown with more power than before, but Fuuka nimbly evades them with ease.

“It's useless. You're just upping the power in it. What you call a 'Flash'—— is done like this!”

As she swings her two katanas, three of the pupils are cut down.

Fuuka leans her two swords on her shoulders as silence reigns.

“Your Flashes are fakes.”

The high disciple pulls out his sword and readies it at Fuuka's declaration.

"It's no fake. It's the real Issen-ryu! The strongest sword art in the Empire!"

"Nope, they're fakes. You've left the important bits out, and even your Flash itself is rusty as shit. Looking at you lot, I can understand how fearsome Master and Senior Disciple are."

Even as she's being disappointed by the Original Issen-ryu, she's thankful that she's fortuitously being made to see the terrifying existences by her side that are Yasushi and Liam in a new light.

But, that's all it is.

They were formidable opponents.

And, she's acquired a real sense of what she's lacking.

"I get it now, seeing you all. It's not enough even if you can produce the Flash. Senior Disciple was emphasizing the basics for that reason."

Seeing Fuuka monologue, the high disciple slashes at her as if in a panic.

His instincts must have reacted to something in fear.

Fuuka narrows her eyes without making a move, yet the high disciple leaping out at her falls apart into tiny cut-up chunks.

Seeing that, the other disciples turn their backs to her and make to escape.

Fuuka breaks into a wide, manic grin.

"Oi, oi, that's no good, you know? Once an Issen-ryu breaks—— isn't it better for them to die?"

Fuuka fires a Flash at the scattering pupils as she closes the distance.

She puts just enough strength in that attack to bring them down.

Their vitals are slashed through accurately, and they fall over just as Fuuka lands.

Returning her two katanas to their scabbards, Fuuka takes a deep breath, then looks herself over.

“——Well, I’m better off than when I went up against Senior Disciple.”

Fuuka, who came out victorious against her fellow practitioners, moves to search for her next opponent.



“The truth is always cruel, it seems.”

My kimono has become nothing but tatters.

The training armor I wore under that, too, has purged of its own accord without fulfilling what it was meant to do.

I’m shirtless and clad only in my hakama, having removed my top.

Blood flows from my wounds, but it’s not fatal so I neglect them.

Running the katana in my right hand to its scabbard in my left, I gaze up at the ceiling.

The lights are dazzling.

And now, I’ve become embarrassed at myself with the misunderstanding I’ve had till now.

“From the start, Master hasn’t been drawing his blade, huh.”

The Original Issen-ryu pupils surrounding me fire in Flashes, almost as if to say that my realization has nothing to do with the current situation.

With my thumb on its guard, I push the katana slightly out of its scabbard. The sword makes a satisfying clink.

When happens then?

Seventeen of the pupils including the high disciples fall to the ground in pieces, blood pooling around their scattered remains.

Not one drop of blood was sprayed into the air.

——And, I never drew my blade from its scabbard.

I simply made a sound.

With that one mere action, seventeen men are carved up, and the room itself is scarred.

It's the innermost secret that I've arrived on at the end of my severe training.

The Flash exists in the boundary where strength and skill are insufficient, much less magic.

The skill that I had been throwing around until now was just something imitating the Flash.

“Master doesn't carry around a katana. ——There was no need from the start, huh.”

As I search my memories, I recall that when I reunited with him at Viscount Razel—— now Baron Razel's territory, Master hadn't been wearing a sword.

It's not that he hadn't been wearing one—— He had no need to.

That may be impossible for me in my current state. If I don't carry a sword, I probably won't be able to fire a Flash. Even if I could technically perform one, it'll most likely end in failure.

“So this is the true Flash.”

Murmuring so, I turn back to the surviving pupils.

One of them is still alive, but his face makes it clear that he can't comprehend what just happened.

I walk up to him slowly.

With a face full of fear, his body trembling, he sends Flashes at me.

His aim not having settled, there's no need for me to even evade any of his slashes.

“D-don't come! Don't come heeere!!”

Seeing his crying and screaming figure, I can't help but feel disdain, wondering if this really is the same Issen-ryu.

As I reach him he crumbles, falling on his rear.

The smell of ammonia wafts from the floor, but I pay it no attention and ask.

“Where's your teacher?”

“Huh?”

“The instructor of the Original Issen-ryu. What's his name? His location? And, our Master is untouched, right?”

It's frustrating that with my control over the Flash—— the true Flash still green, only one of them is still alive.

However, with one alive I'll at least be able to ask some questions.

“Answer me. Where is your master? Where is ours?”

“T-together with Governor-sa——”

I separate the man's head from his shoulders. I don't sense any strong presence next to the governor, but there won't be any problems if I ask them next.

I sheath my katana with an audible clink.

At that, the heavy door blocking the exit to the room falls apart into multiple pieces.

It looks like I've been mistaken from the start.

The innermost secret of the Issen-ryu is to cut without drawing one's sword.

“Well, now to take Ellen with me and head further in.”

I've gotten past one wall.

What's left is only to rescue Master.



“What does not drawing his blade even mean!?”

The Guide, who had been monitoring Liam, can't begin to understand what just happened in front of his eyes.

The Liam that proposed the Issen-ryu secret to be a sword technique that didn't draw swords is unbelievable.

Gudwar is the same.

“Certainly, a school that can move forward without having to draw swords can be said to be the best, but this is wrong! The meaning's different! Actually not drawing a sword, what does that even mean!”

A slash borne from neither sword technique nor magic.

Gudwar and the Guide lose their minds at the answer Liam arrived at.

After lots of preparation by them to create an Issen-ryu to take Liam down, Liam defeated those and ended up getting even stronger.

It's a nightmare for the Guide.

“Gudwar, if it’s like this then—— Hihih!?”

The Guide moves to devise the next plan with Gudwar, but the entity itself is red-faced and giving off steam.

It seems like Liam is just not to Gudwar’s liking.

“I’ve been anticipating a battle full of blood and tangled limbs, and yet this happened! Do you think this is forgivable! I’ll crush him. I’ll crush Liam here without fail!”

Liam’s Issen-ryu is no longer a sword art anymore.

As Gudwar decides so, he clutches the Guide with his octopus limbs.

“S-stop. It hurts!”

With the strangled Guide in pain, Gudwar constricts him even harder to vent his anger.

“It’s because you’ve gone and done unnecessary things!”

“How unreasonable!”

Though the Guide says it’s unreasonable, Liam has gotten this strong exactly because of the Guide’s interference.

There’s nothing wrong at all with Gudwar’s anger.

“If it’s going to be like this, then I’ll bury Liam at all costs! He cannot be allowed to exist. If I leave him alone—— He’ll certainly become our enemy! If I don’t erase him here, his blade will end up reaching us!”

The vapor Gudwar gives off turns black and begins expanding into the surroundings.

It extends all the way up to space, calling Liam’s enemies to it.

The Guide looks at that scene as he’s being constricted.

(W-with this, Liam too is finished.)

The Guide endures being tormented by Gudwar as long as Liam can be taken down.



There are two beings with evil intentions bent on killing Liam.

The black vapor that reaches out to space continues expanding without being visible to the human eye.

Staring at that spectacle from atop the bow of a black warship is a shape of light in a dog's form.

It howls into the airless, soundless vacuum of the cosmos.

Transcending space, the howl reaches the ears of the people it was meant for.



“Hm? Did I hear a dog howl? Well, whatever.”

Yasushi is shut in his cell like a product on display, in the room where Chester lies in wait for somebody.

The man himself is considerably flustered.

“Everybody lost? All thirty of them!?”

Yasushi snorts at Chester's back, seeing him receive the report from his subordinates.

(Oh? By some chance, are hostile forces assaulting the place? That's good, take these fellows down like that and help me. Did my prayer get through?)

Yasushi, who had been captured, had been praying ‘Please send someone to rescue me’ every day.

After all, since he's a man that can't do anything, he prays when he's in trouble.

Seeing that wish come true, Yasushi rejoices heedlessly.

If it's Chester's enemy, they might rescue him from his captivity.

Carrying such fleeting expectations, Yasushi feels a strange cold in the air.

A chill runs down his spine.

(Is it the flu?)

As he escapes reality thinking to stay warm and get some sleep, a slash cuts through the door to the room.

(Hm, help has—— Huh?)

Yasushi's eyes were glowing with anticipation, but then he sees the silhouettes of the two revealed by the collapsing door.

What appears—— is Liam.

The grown-up Liam has developed into a sturdier figure than what Yasushi had known.

Such a man fixes his posture upon noticing Yasushi.

“Master, apologies for the delay.”

Seeing Liam appear on the scene covered in wounds, Yasushi too fixes his posture and gets into seiza.

He keeps up the appearance of absolute calm, but internally, he screams.

(God, this isn't who I wanted!! This guy alone is no gooooo!! Quickly send him back!)

Of all the people out there, the one he wanted most not to come to his rescue has arrived.

There's the figure of a red-haired girl behind Liam.

That girl calls Liam her master.

“Master, the instructor of the Original Issen-ryu is nowhere to be found.”

“We'll just get his location from Chester. ——Now then, you're the one who kidnapped Master? You're fully prepared for what happens next, right?”

Liam threatens Chester with a bitter, cold voice, causing a thick and heavy atmosphere to descend upon the room.

Now even finding it difficult to breathe, Yasushi can't stop cold sweat from running down his back.

However, it doesn't end there.

“Arere? Senior Disciple is the first to arrive?”

The one showing herself is Riho, who's similarly tattered-looking.

Only, as she steps into the room and sees Yasushi, she breaks into a full-faced smile.

“It's Master! Masteeeeeeer!!”

From behind Riho, who's excitedly waving her arms, the one who comes leaping into the room is Fuuka.

Despite being similarly covered in wounds herself, Fuuka starts crying tears of joy upon seeing Yasushi.

“At last. We can finally meet at last! I've come to rescue you, Master!”

Yasushi desperately forces a smile, and nods lightly to the four of them who came to his rescue.

(I never wanted to meet you all a second time though! I sent you two out to defeat Liam and yet, why are you working together with him!?)

With this incomprehensible situation, Yasushi reaches his limit.

Hence, no one paid any attention to what Chester has been trying to say.

He holds a switch in his hand.

“Don’t come close to me! If you get any closer, your master will be reduced to—— Wha!?”

Chester had the switch held out in front, but it disappears to finely-chopped bits once Liam and the others focus their attention on him.

And, individuals appear from the floor and walls near Yasushi.

The masked individuals seem to be Liam’s subordinates.

“Liam-sama, the explosive devices have been disposed of. All traps have been dealt with as well.”

Liam utters a word of affirmation.

Then, he returns his gaze to the shivering Chester.

Trembling with fear, he draws his katana, being unable to bear the pressure from Liam any longer.

“T-this monster...!”

Liam counters the Flash that Chester sends in spite of his inexperience.

A shower of sparks blossoms in the space between the two.

Chester repeatedly sends Flashes at him, but Liam intercepts all of them.

With a hand on his chin, Liam turns to face Ellen.

“This is just about right. Ellen, you’ll be this guy’s opponent.”

“——Yes.”

Ellen walks out in front of Chester.

[1] – Iaido [[wikipedia](#)]

Swordsmen of the Issen-ryu

We've marched into the governor's mansion to rescue Master Yasushi.

Going into the room where the governor Chester is in, we see Master being held in a cage.

——I won't forgive this outrage to Master Yasushi.

But, Chester's strength is just right.

“Ellen, you can do it, can't you?”

As I call out to her, Ellen replies in a soft voice.

“I can.”

Ellen walks out in front of Chester.

She's nervous, but seeing her in full concentration, I'm reassured as her master.

Chester's eyes dart about as he looks at us not making a move.

Seeing a child, Ellen, stepping out to confront him, his guard goes up considerably.

“W-what do you think you're doing?”

Since Ellen can't respond, I decide to do it for her.

“My disciple hasn't cut anyone down yet. Since she's not yet fully-fledged as a swordsman, I thought to let her accumulate experience by killing you,

that's all. We've already gotten Master out. You no longer have any value."

I call out to Riho and Fuuka who are shooting Chester cold looks, asking them to observe.

"I'll be unveiling my disciple to Master Yasushi. Riho, Fuuka—— You two, be my witnesses, please."

Riho shrugs.

"Okay~"

Fuuka's face shows her interest in how Ellen will fight.

"Ellen, don't bring shame to Master or Senior Disciple."

I turn to look at Master. He closes his eyes once, then opens them slowly.

What he looks at is Ellen and Chester.

To Master Yasushi, Ellen is a disciple of a disciple.

I've made sure to spare no effort training her, but I wonder how she looks like in Master Yasushi's eyes?

Even I get nervous.

"Ellen, you're still green. Don't use the Flash."

I'm challenging her to enter a life-or-death battle after sealing the Flash, but Ellen is calm.

She doesn't even give the impression of wanting to draw her katana.

"Acknowledged, Master."

It looks like her concentration is high.

She's waiting for my signal to begin.

However, Chester himself doesn't look ready.

"Don't mess with me! Since when did I agree to something like fighting to kill with this brat! Guards! Guards, come out!"

He shouts for his subordinates that he made to wait outside the room, but Kukri rises from my shadow, the sound of stifled laughter emanating from behind his mask.

"Everyone has already departed. They're eagerly awaiting Governor-dono's arrival."

Man, capable subordinates are great.

Also, it's good that he doesn't go wild like Tia or Marie.

"You've saved me the effort. Thanks, Kukri."

"I'm honored to receive your praise."

Seeing Kukri give a reverent bow, Chester falls to the floor, probably thinking of something.

He places two hands on the floor in front of him, buttering up to me.

"Count Banfield! L-let's make a transaction."

Seeing me give no response, Chester continues flapping his mouth, thinking I was listening.

"My house and the surrounding lords have gathered more than sixty thousand ships to this planet. I-if you let me go, I could even help you out."

Seeing Chester bringing a deal to me while trembling, I heave a small sigh.

"Marie."

At the call, a display window immediately pops up in midair, displaying Marie's slightly flustered expression.

□Liam-sama, it's true that ships are heading to this planet on an enormous scale—— What! Liam-sama is covered in wounds! W-we'll bring medical aid right away!□

“Shut up, you're noisy.”

Chester stands and points at me, maybe thinking that he's managed to reach a bargain.

This guy, his subordinates, they all seem to love making transactions.

“Now, what will you do, Count Banfield! Do we have a deal, or do we not!”

This guy's one to run his mouth as he likes.

I've already decided such a thing from the start, haven't I.

“——Who the hell do you think you're talking to? It's unthinkable that I would make a deal with you. Shut up and become fodder for my disciple. It's an honor to become a stepping stone for the true Issen-ryu, isn't it?”

“Huh?”

At Chester making an idiotic sound, I shake my head and enlighten him.

“Sixty thousand ships? What about them?”

Marie cuts in, seeing the scene from her display window.

□Liam-sama, we'll retrieve you right away!□

“Don't interrupt me.”

□Nh!□

“——Marie, send Avid to the planet.”

□B-but!□

“This is tedious, you know.”

□M-my apologies.□

“You all can escape first if you like. After all, I’ll just catch up with you using Avid later. As you’d expect, losing subordinates to such a thing is a big waste.”

Being told to run away first, Marie’s expression grows grim.

□I, too, have not fallen so low as to abandon my lord and make a run for it.□

The transmission cutting off, I turn to look at Chester.

He looks at me with an expression of abject disbelief.

In the first place, it’s impossible to think that we’d run away from this small villain.

“——How long do you plan on sitting down? Stand up right away.”

As I glare at him, Chester’s mouth flaps soundlessly.

Ellen breaks her silence.

“Even if you are a villain, I don’t feel comfortable about killing you if you don’t resist. Please show me your pride as a swordsman at the very least.”

Being told something like that by a child younger than him, Chester gets to his feet with sword in hand.

“Don’t look down on me! Setting Liam aside, I’ll be able to kill a single brat anytime!”

——Being addressed casually by the likes of a lowly governor isn’t anything forgivable.

I almost end up killing him, but I hold myself back for Ellen’s sake.

Chester is truly the best opponent for Ellen's growth.

I look at Chester and appraise the man.

"It's unforgivable that you've addressed me without my title, but I'll overlook it this one time. You're just right for Ellen. A man utilizing his standing to the fullest, tormenting his people, holding an ambition not befitting his stature. Your worst crime was to have kidnapped Master, though."

Chester makes a disrespectful smile at me.

"I'm unforgivable for tormenting my people? I'd heard you were a softy, but it looks like it was true after all! Ruling over people means to do just that! No matter how much lip service you line up, what's the difference between you and me? It's just that you lavish your people with special treatment!"

I'm the same as this guy? I want to vomit.

"Don't lump me together with you. In the first place, our statuses are different. It'd absurd to even draw a comparison. ——Well now, I don't have the time to talk endlessly with you. Get started already."

A small scoundrel comparing himself to me, a proper villain; there's a limit to how conceited you can get.

"Put on as much airs as you can. It's the end for you all as well. Even if it's just me, I'll kill this brat!"

Chester fires a Flash before the signal to begin.

The Flash heading for the base of her neck is shattered with a single stroke of her katana.

"T-take this! And this!"

Chester sends Flashes at her repeatedly, but Ellen bats them all away with her sword out.

Riho remarks with a disgusted look.

“This is a Flash? He’s making light of it, isn’t he.”

Fuuka looks like she lost all interest.

“He’s just sending slashes at her. It’s painful to watch.”

I gaze at Ellen’s situation with crossed arms.

Chester is truly a splendid opponent.

Tormenting the citizens of the territory, this man can even be considered the very model of an evil governor.

Chester pants, but in front of his eyes, Ellen returns her katana to its scabbard.

Seeing that, it seems like Chester thinks that he can have her spare him.

“A-are you helping me? Did you—— think that I’d say thanks, fool!”

He moves to fire a Flash to take advantage of the opportunity, but Ellen bends over, leaping right into Chester’s space with great force and drawing her katana in one smooth motion.

She draws her blade in iai as she passes him by—— cutting through him.

Ellen flicks her katana clean of blood, looking down at the fallen Chester.

“I won’t forgive abuse hurled at Master.”

Seeing that, Riho and Fuuka give halfhearted applause.

“With this Ellen is fully-fledged too, it seems.”

“In a few decades, she might even be able to spar with us.”

I walk up to Ellen.

She's holding her katana in a death grip, looking down at the body of Chester whose life she cut down with her own hands.

Her breathing is unsteady and her legs tremble.

Just as Amagi did for me when I was a child, I cover Ellen's clenched hands with my own.

As I take her fingers off the handle one by one, Ellen looks up at me as if to say something.

Her face is pallid.

"Since you've decided to become a swordsman, avoiding this will get you nowhere. You should have been resolved for this, you know."

If one is unwilling to cut down a person, they'd be better off not aiming to be a swordsman.

An Issen-ryu swordsman not cutting anyone down is out of the question.

Ellen casts her eyes downwards.

"Please excuse my shamefulness."

But, I can't find myself taking up a cold attitude against this disciple of mine who accomplished something.

"No, you're more splendid than I was during my turn."

Ellen looks up at me in shock, but I head towards Master Yasushi's prison without explaining further.

I make use of Kukri to break open the prison, and Master Yasushi gets to his feet.

"You've gotten bigger, it seems."

"It's all thanks to Master's teachings."

As I kneel and lower my head, Master speaks in a clear voice as if he hadn't spent time in captivity.

“Stand up, please. Liam-dono is already a fine swordsman of the Issen-ryu. Since you have a disciple, too, it won't do to conduct yourself without dignity.”

Getting to my feet, I turn to regard Ellen.

“Master, this is my disciple Ellen. What does Master think of her?”

Master Yasushi strokes his unshaven chin.

“She seems like a swordswoman with good talent.”

Having the disciple I take pride in be praised, I end up feeling both reassured and triumphant.

“Thank you very much. She's my number one disciple.”



Yasushi panics before Liam.

(The disciples are increasiiiiiiing!!)

Yasushi is terrified that a subordinate disciple Ellen has been born at some point.

Liam is fearsome too, but from Yasushi's point of view, Ellen is also a great swordsman.

Aware that he'll be killed if they fought, he can't help but feel terror.

And also—— The problem is Ellen's eyes.

(T-that brat, is she doubting me!?)

Liam, Riho, and Fuuka; all three look at him with glowing eyes void of doubt.

That's scary in itself, but Ellen who doubts him is the most terrifying.

“Ahem!”

With a seemingly deliberate cough, Yasushi thinks about how to escape from this scene.

If he remains here, they'll eventually find out all about his lies.

Should that happen, he automatically imagines a future waiting for him like that of the cut-up Chester and his cronies.

“I am delighted at everyone's growth. Well then, it's about time for me to——”

At that instant.

Liam looks up at the ceiling.

“A vulgar bunch has come, huh.”

As Yasushi wonders what he's talking about, multiple displays spring to life around Liam, projecting a view of the skies.

The security forces of the planet are gathering as if to surround the governor's mansion.

□Capture the criminals that killed the Governor! If it's impossible, there'll be no issues even if you kill them!□

The shapes of battleships appear outside as well.

Sirens ring out and the surrounding residents are forcibly made to evacuate.

(T-these guys, are they planning on blowing this mansion away with us too!?)

With the governor's armed forces included, the hostility directed at Yasushi and the others is high.

However, Liam heaves a small sigh.

“——Avid, do it.”

Right after his words.

A quake travels throughout the mansion. Then, the security vehicles and armed forces are pierced by lasers, mowed down by beams, and erased in the flames of missiles.

Just one single mobile knight is shown on the multiple screens, backlit by flames with its two eyes gleaming ominously.

(Hiyah!?)

Yasushi, who somehow managed to stifle the idiotic sound coming from his throat, is shocked by the arrival of the lone knight in the videos.

(Huh? Is this the mobile knight from that time? Why is this old-ass mobile knight so powerful!?)

As the ceiling of the governor's mansion shakes, Riho and Fuuka release Flashes at it.

It bursts apart into carved chunks from their Flashes, and Avid gently lands through the now-open ceiling.

Liam speaks.

“We're getting into Avid. It's our escape from this planet.”

Fuuka places her hands on the back of her head.

“Huh~ we're running away?”

“Don’t say something foolish. We’re going back, gathering our forces, and marching back in here to crush them flat.”

Yasushi wants to tremble hearing Liam’s reply, but he endures it.

(Even though a fleet of sixty thousand ships is coming, why are you coming back to fight! You’d normally just run, dumbass!)

He doesn’t say it out loud even if he thinks so.

After all, Yasushi is a small man.

If at all possible, he doesn’t wish to retort at Liam, who’s stronger than him.

Yasushi is a man with little courage.

However, at that moment, a being appears that might be able to rescue Yasushi from his predicament.

It has an awfully sinister form.

Its body is that of a man dressed in a suit, and octopus legs sprout from its head.

It’s red-faced as if trembling in anger, and its eight legs swing around in twists and turns.

“——Your existence is unforgivable. It cannot be allowed to exist.”

Yasushi had thought for a moment that help had come, but he understands seeing it that it’s directing sinister bloodlust towards them.

(Huh? What is this!? What the hell is this!?)

The octopus spouts vapor from its mouth like a kettle.

A sound like that of a flute can be heard.

“There’s no need for the Issen-ryu. It must not exist in this world—— You all, I’ll erase all traces of your existence right here and now!”

The head portion expands outwards, and drawing in its human-looking bottom half, it transforms into a giant octopus.

The vapor it blows from its mouth is dyed black, and the surroundings start to become obscured.

Riho and Fuuka have readied their swords seeing this enemy’s strangeness.

“This guy, what is he!?”

“Since earlier, the shakes won’t stop.”

The two of them are shaken.

Ellen has even ended up plopping down on the floor in fear.

Yasushi’s instincts are telling him.

(——Ah, I’m dead.)

Before the overwhelming presence in front of him, he’s so dumbfounded it’s as if he went one full circuit back to his calm self.

However, only Liam raises an eyebrow in suspicion.

The Issen-ryu's Enemy

A giant octopus suddenly appeared, saying things like ‘You can’t be allowed to exist’ to us.

More than that, what I want to say is—— What the hell is this thing?

Turning to look at my comrades, I see the figures of my shivering junior disciples.

They’ve instinctually taken up a stance, but the blades they’ve drawn are trembling.

Ellen has even plopped down on the floor, having lost all will to fight.

I’m unable to rebuke her state.

Kukri appears from my shadow.

“Liam-sama, please make your escape.”

Kukri’s decision to compel me to run is the right one.

However, something like escaping is impossible at this point.

“Stand down, you all.”

The normally composed Kukri gets flustered.

“But...!”

“Stand down, I said!”

As Kukri does so obeying my orders, Master, who's staring at the giant octopus, piques my interest.

"Master?"

Looking at Master, I see not so much as a twitch on him as he fixes the giant octopus with a dignified gaze.

There's no sign of fear or anger in his countenance.

He then sends me a question.

"Liam-dono, I wonder if you can defeat it?"

Is Master not going to take it on?

That's what I had thought, but he probably wants to ascertain my strength.

The octopus heads closer, but Avid projects a forcefield around us in protection from behind us.

The giant octopus has an ominous appearance, and the structures of the governor's mansion it touches corrode.

The black vapor it emits from its mouth looks poisonous.

"——Just barely, I think."

In comparison to the likes of the Original Issen-ryu, the giant octopus is a formidable enemy.

I sense intuitively that my Flash falls just a little short of defeating it.

Master speaks.

"Then, I leave it to you. I am already—— no longer able to fight."

"Huh?"

Master can't fight, he said?



Even as Yasushi outwardly exudes the impression of a philosopher, he internally holds on to the slight hope in his disciples.

(This monster suddenly appeared, but these guys aren't human anymore, so they can defeat it, right?)

He sneaks a glance at Riho and Fuuka.

However, the two seem to be in fear.

And, aren't they currently looking at him for help?

(Fools! I'm much weaker compared to you all! There's no way I could win against an opponent that you're afraid of!)

Looking at Liam, he's making a strange expression.

It's inevitable that the composed Liam is aggravating.

Avid had displayed overwhelming firepower earlier, but it looks like it's doing its best just to use its forcefield to prevent the giant octopus from getting closer.

The forcefield is gradually being pushed down, and the giant octopus swells up further, becoming truly enormous.

“Issen-ryu!! All of you will end here!”

It holds great bloodlust towards them for some reason.

(What exactly have I done!? Sure, my life hasn't been anything to be proud of, but I've never done anything to be hated like this!)

Yasushi, who told Liam earlier that he couldn't fight anymore, was lying in the moment to escape from the danger to his life.

It'd be a terrible joke if they thought he was hiding his true strength and thus let him take this monster on.

If so, he should then say that he could no longer fight.

“Liam-dono, please show me your true strength.”

For now, he wants to leave it to Liam and escape from this place.

Even as Liam's eyes open wide in astonishment, he makes a slight nod before walking out in front.

Yasushi prays in his heart.

(Oh Gooooood!! I beg you, please aid Liam just for this one moment! Because if I can just get through this, I'll rely on my own strength to escape!)

This is Yasushi, the man that thinks constantly of running away even if he survives.



As Gudwar unveils his true form, the Guide looks on from above him.

“Way to go, Gudwaaaaaaaar!! You're the beeeest!!”

He revealed his form to Liam and the others, and headed to attack them without reservation for his appearance.

That giant body seems to be held at bay by Avid's forcefield, but in truth, Liam's power is the one making it difficult to get close.

The feelings of his citizens.

And, the feelings of the citizens of the planets he's saved till this day.

The prayers of this vast abundance of people, not forgetting the Holy Tree in the Banfield house, cover Liam with protection.

That protection moves into and amplifies Avid, the mass of gold called a mobile knight, and imbibes the forcefield with a divine power.

From the Guide's viewpoint, it's as if Gudwar is jumping straight into the fire himself.

The Guide would absolutely never do such a thing, or even consider it.

Even if Gudwar won against Liam, many years and months will be needed to recover from the injuries he sustained. In the worst case, he'll end up bearing the pain forever.

And yet, there's a reason for Gudwar's deep intent to kill Liam.

“Whew~ At any rate, I didn't think that he'd step into our domain from a misunderstanding. Although it's slight, anything that can reach us won't be allowed to exist!”

It's truly slight.

It's as slight as the touch of a fingertip, but Liam had stepped into the domain of Gudwar and the Guide.

That is also the result of misunderstandings being built up and his aspiration to greater heights.

“You've done well to grow it this much from a mere magic trick. But, it ends now! Well then, Gudwar, I'll be lending a hand too so please win without fail!”

Black smoke flows forth from the Guide as well, moving in support of Gudwar.

Gudwar increases even further in size, then moves to forcibly engulf Liam and his party—— and at that moment.

“Wha-!?”

The Guide sees light converging behind Liam.

It transforms into the upper half of a gigantic person bigger than even Avid.

With a rugged body, the humanoid shape gives off an atmosphere that's almost like a warrior god.

His upper half is shirtless, but his lower face is shrouded by an armored warrior's mask.

He holds a katana in his hand.

The materialized giant of light glares at the Guide.

“Y-you’re joking. He’s noticed—— Hiih!?”

The giant of light has his blade drawn.

Below that figure, Liam too looks upwards at the Guide.

“He’s found meeee!!”

The Guide leaves Gudwar behind and flees from there in a panic.



I see the disappearing figure of the Guide as I look upwards.

“——It’s my victory.”

Apparently this time, no—— everything has been done with the Guide’s support from behind.

With this astoundingly perfect after-sales support, I end up feeling a little apologetic.

The Original Issen-ryu, or the approaching fleet of ships—— with the Guide’s aid, I’ll win without fail!

Confident that everything has been settled, I pass the katana in my hands to Ellen.

Ellen seems unable to stand.

“M-Master?”

Without answering her questioning gaze, I look upwards at Avid.

“Avid, hand over my katana.”

I catch the katana springing forth from Avid’s cockpit with a raised left hand.

It’s my favorite katana.

The approaching gigantic octopus opens its large bloodshot eyes wide.

“That sword is...!”

It seems considerably panicked, maybe because it knows about this sword.

My gut told me that I’d be able to cut it down if I used this sword of mine, but apparently I’m completely unmistaken.

The katana that I dispossessed Goaz of is quite the fine article.

This too is thanks to the Guide.

“This is the best sword in my possession. If we’re together, I believe we could reach even you.”

I gently place a hand on Ellen’s head.

“Ellen, so far, I’ve never shown you the true Flash.”

“Huh?”

“Finally I too, have become fully-fledged as your master.”

I walk out, and hold my katana up to my eyes with both hands.

My eyes are reflected on its blade as I draw it thirty centimeters or so from its scabbard.

There seems to be a glow reflected in my purple eyes.

“I can’t yet say that I don’t need a sword, but.”

Seeing this, the giant octopus expands as if in a panic.

Swelling up, it moves to engulf the forcefield that Avid projected.

“As I thought, that sword is ‘God of Go-’——”

I’m not free enough to listen to the giant octopus’ words.

^{Issen}
“Flash.”

I send the katana back into its scabbard without drawing it, and its sound rings.

The giant octopus then splits into two halves from top to bottom, cut by my Flash.

Black smoke pours out from the bisected cross sections, and the giant octopus begins to shrivel.

“Igyaaagyaaaah!!”

Its shriek reverberates all around.

“I should’ve——killed——you——all——earlier”

The body of the giant octopus scatters into smoke in the skies, the black smoke disappearing, replaced by glowing motes of golden light.

——What is this phenomenon? It’s a little nice. No, wait, I really like it.

I affix the katana to my waist, then turn around.

Riho has a shocked expression.

“J-just now—— S-Senior Disciple, don’t tell me you...”

Fuuka lets go of her swords, plopping down on the floor teary eyed.

“Scaryyyy. What was that earlier. Such a thing, I’ve never ever seen it before. Senior Disciple’s amazing too, geez. I don’t understand anything anymore.”

Ellen looks at me with clasped hands and tears spilling from her eyes.

“M-Master. Congratulations. I couldn’t see Master’s Flash, but. It’s certainly seared into these eyes of mine.”

An invisible slash.

The true form of that isn’t a slash with a speed that no one can see.

It isn’t a blade created out of magic, either.

Supernatural phenomenon? ——That’s not far off the mark, too.

Only, it’s a technique that cannot be realized if even a single one of those were lacking.

The Flash is in the domain attainable from acquiring all those and further surpassing one’s limits.

“Master—— I’ve finally grasped the secrets of the Issen-ryu.”

With the battle over as well, I bow deeply to Master.

It certainly isn’t a secret that can be explained with words.

Without Master and the Guide around to show me the way, I’d probably be throwing the misunderstood Flashes around all the time like the Original Issen-ryu.

I can't laugh at the Sword Saint that I once ridiculed now.

I'm someone exactly the same as him, having done nothing but train myself in the wrong manner.

Master receives such a person as I in a gentle way.

"Magnificent, Liam-dono. You've already surpassed me. I have nothing to say."

"T-that can't be. I still haven't reached Master's level."

Master's Flash that I saw as a child is still seared into my eyes even now.

That Flash is the very most genuine of articles.

"No, Liam-dono is the best!"

"No, I still can't win against Master."

"No, no, Liam-dono is already the best, you see!"

"Master is the best in my heart even now!"

"Liam-dono is the best, I said!"

"That's why, Master is more——"

As I quarrel with Master, a display window opens up and Marie begins her report.

□Liam-sama, something serious has happened!□

"What is it? If you're struggling, from now I'll——"

□N-no. Some of the enemy have begun firing on their own troops.□

"Firing on their own troops?"

□Yes. They say that the mercenaries they brought along have turned on them.□

Seeing Marie's troubled face, I can't help but find it amusing.

It's impossible for me to lose with the Guide following up after me!

"At times like this surely—— 'Heaven's favor is on our side', was that it? Don't look so surprised. I just win what I should be winning at. You go do your job too."

□Y-yes!□

The communication cuts.

"Now then, I want to talk about various things, but let's first evacuate this place, shall we. Master, I'll send you to my mothership."

"No, there's no need for that. This planet is where my family——"

Seeing Master say that much, Ellen answers.

"Yasushi-sama's family is currently being guarded by Master."

"——Huh?"

In order for us to wage war if we needed to, we had Madam and Yasuyuki-kun evacuate to the mothership prior.

"Please be at ease, Master!"

As I speak, Master looks at me with distant eyes for some reason.

"I-is that so."

◇

At that time.

The incognito ships led by Marie are fighting in space.

"What's the current situation!"

Marie's voice resounds across the bridge, but the crew aren't able to grasp it either.

The operator reports.

"We can believe that part of the enemy has rebelled, but we don't have the full details."

The three thousand-strong group of what seem to be mercenaries are going wild around the battlefield attacking their comrades.

The governor's father's—— the count's ship, too, is in panic after receiving an attack from their followers.

Marie feels cold sweat run down her back.

(Heaven's favor is on our side—— It's exactly as Liam-sama says.)

Even with the tide against them, it seems like the ever-victorious Liam has something beyond human comprehension looking out for him.

The operator shouts.

"Confirmed retrieval of Avid! We can withdraw at any moment!"

"Break through head on! Prioritize the escape of the flagship first! Protect Liam-sama alone, even if you have to give up your lives."

Their lives are literally hanging on a thread.

They move to retreat with a sudden assault on the enemy.

Many of them will likely perish under fire, but it's enough if Liam can be rescued.

"The enemy is falling apart. Assault formations!"

As Marie sends out a command, Liam's figure appears on the bridge monitors.

□The flagship goes first. I'll be sortieing too.□

At Liam's boldly grinning figure covered in wounds, even Marie disregards the order.

“I'm unable to accept any more than this even if it's Liam-sama's order. Even if my neck is hung for this, I'll have Liam-sama withdraw from this place.”

□——Who do you think you're speaking to?□

Silence washes over the bridge at Liam's chilling voice, but Marie continues speaking with the full belief in her devotion.

“As long as Liam-sama survives, the Banfield house will rise up any number of times. It won't be able to rise for a second time if we instead lose Liam-sama here, won't it. I have no intention of ignoring my own beliefs.”

Liam smiles.

It seems he's taken an interest to Marie's answer.

□I can acknowledge your loyalty. However, don't look down on me so much. I haven't decided that this is a losing battle, have I? I'm a man that will win without fail.□

Cutting into the display of Liam with his unwavering belief in victory is Chengshi, the leader of the mercenary group.

□It's been a while, Liam-sama.□

Marie glares at the woman appearing in the display, who's clothed in a Chinese-style outfit.

“Y, you are...”

□I've entered the battle leading the mercenaries. I thought to attack the side with the most enemies but—— On the contrary, I believe this might be a

good chance to do battle with Liam-sama.□

Marie makes a face like she's swallowed a bitter bug.

(Of all people, the most extreme of ours is turning against us.)

Marie can be considered a radical too, but the elite of the elite are the types like Chengshi who actually feel alive in the middle of battle.

For those who find bliss challenging the strong, they must find Liam to be a much sweeter opponent.

However, Liam narrows his eyes at Chengshi's words.

□I have no need for a dog that doesn't know how to play properly. Come at me already if you're coming. I'll crush you all flat.□

Hearing Liam giving no indication of even taking one step back, Chengshi blushes.

□Are you not going to request me to lend you a hand here?□

□I'll win even without you around.□

Before Liam's unwavering confidence, Chengshi seems to have given up.

□That's why you're interesting. ——Let's enter under his command.□

As three thousand ships come under Liam's direction, the operator reports the situation.

“They're disguised, but all of them are using the standard equipment of the Banfield house!”

Hearing that, Marie immediately deliberates on a breakthrough plan out of this current state.

(The enemy's numbers have decreased, and ours have increased. However, this difference in numbers is——)

At that point—— A new noble's fleet appears.

The gigantic fleet of over twenty thousand ships bear a different crest from the Banfield house's.

Seeing that, Liam's earlier composure vanishes and his eyes open wide in panic.

□——H-how could this be?□

It must be unexpected, even for Liam.

A transmission arrives from the fleet.

□I've come to help, Darling!□

Bad Situation

Turning back time a little.

A large fleet moves through space.

That large fleet is Rosetta's Guard.

Rather than gather state-of-the-art equipment like Liam, the fleet is gathered from current leading products.

The twenty thousand and more spaceships bearing the Claudia house's crest make for a grand spectacle.

Rosetta, looking out at such a scene, sits uncomfortably on her personal seat.

Since she's soon to be Liam's wife, her personal seat is lavish to the point of looking like a queen's throne.

The seat, with an emphasis on function, has decorations applied all over it.

"I wonder if gathering such numbers is all right?"

With Rosetta putting a hand to her cheek in worry, the one able to distract her is the maid outfit-wearing Ciel.

"It's not a problem! This is also proof that many are willing to follow Rosetta-sama after all!"

Making a disgusted look at Ciel is Rosetta's support in military affairs, Eulisia.

“It’s within budget, but even so this is way too much.”

Hearing Eulisia’s words, Rosetta naturally begins to feel apologetic.

“Yes, I know. It’s a little too much.”

“It’s not just a little. We possess military strength surpassing some lower count houses.”

Being corrected by Eulisia, Rosetta curls up on herself.

“I wonder if going out on training like this is a good idea?”

It would be a great movement leading the entire fleet this time.

In a sense, this would have the aim of showing off Rosetta’s military prowess.

The one who devised this is Ciel.

“It’s not a problem. We’ll show just how splendid Rosetta-sama’s Guard—— Huh?”

It happens at that time. Ciel cuts her sentence short, looking restlessly around her.

Eulisia folds her arms.

“What is it, suddenly?”

“N-no. I feel like I heard a dog howling.”

Eulisia makes an exasperated face, heaving a small sigh.

“Chino should be taking care of the mansion, though?”

Chino of the dog tribe is working as a maid in the mansion.

Being told that she wasn’t here, Ciel shakes her head.

“That isn’t it! I heard something like an actual dog’s——”

Then, a commotion arises among the operators.

“Rosetta-sama. We’ve received a request for assistance from a lord’s fleet.”

Rosetta corrects her expression.

“Assistance? Which fleet is it?”

“Well, actually, the data exists, but detailed information is not being disclosed.”

“Use my jurisdiction to release it.”

“Yes!”

Doing so and having the released information come to them, the fleet is revealed to be the special fleet that Liam organized.

“This is—— It’s Liam-sama’s fleet!”

“Darling’s!?”

The operator confirms the situation.

“They’ve entered into battle with nobles of the Calvin faction. They’re outnumbered by over sixty times!”

The bridge is in uproar.

Eulisia makes a transmission in a hurry.

The commander manning Rosetta’s mothership barks out an order.

“Quickly send a request for assistance to the home planet!”

Rosetta stands.

“The Guard will head to Darling’s rescue with every ship.”

“Rosetta-sama!?”

In astonishment, the commander moves to persuade Rosetta to return to the home planet right away, but she shakes her head.

“It’s my decision. We’ll head to his rescue!”

The commander having yielded to Rosetta’s resolve, the Guard moves to save Liam.

Ciel contemplates.

(H, huh? Why is Liam being saved by my plan?)

◇

——This is wrong.

I don’t wish to utter my complaints before the large fleet of twenty thousand that appeared.

“I-It’s wrong. Guide, this is wrong!”

Having cut off the communication with Marie, I’m cradling my head within Avid’s cockpit.

“Why has Rosetta come out with this timing! Anyone else would be fine!”

Of all people to be helped by, I didn’t even think it would be Rosetta.

I writhe around for a while, then grip the control sticks tightly.

“If it’s like this then I’ll be taking out my angeeeeeer!”

I launch in Avid to vent on the Calvin faction nobles advancing on us.

◇

A pilot speaks of his experience going up against Liam that day.

“I still dream of that day. ——They’re nightmares.”

The pilot had been drifting in space before Liam’s sortie, having been taken out of action.

Set adrift, he’d been watching the battle from afar.

“The cockpit’s monitors were working. I was watching what was going on outside, but no one will probably believe what I have to say about that battlefield. Even I don’t want to.”

Despite there being recorded videos of it, they were said to be falsified.

The sight was that unbelievable.

“Our allies started exploding just an instant after that Avid machine dashed past them. They were engulfed by the explosion after being cut down. Explosions happened right after he passed by almost as if he was leaving a trail.”

The pilot takes a gulp of alcohol.

“The fleet of the count moved to retreat, but the traitor mercenary band cut off their escape and left them with nowhere to run. The fleet even raised a surrender. It even reached my cockpit. ——But, what did you think the Banfield house said?”

To the surrendering fleet of the count’s house, the commander of Liam’s fleet Marie regarded them with cold eyes and said this.

□We won’t accept surrender. You bastards will end here.□

The pilot laughs through his tears.

“Strange story, isn’t it? Even excluding the traitors, we numbered fifty thousand. In spite of that, the enemy had less than half of ours at twenty-

four thousand. Despite having double the numbers, we were trampled over. I—— I could only watch as it happened.”

The pilot is asked for the reason the battle occurred.

“The reason we fought? Orders from above. There’s no way I would know something like that. ——But, the rumors did flow down to us. It seems like the count’s idiot son captured Liam’s master. Look here, it’s that Issen-ryu. Furious at that, Liam came marching in. Absurd, isn’t it?”

Everyone denied the rumors.

It’s unthinkable that the Count Banfield at that time, an eminent noble of even the vast Empire, would expressly do something like march into the frontier.

There should most likely be other reasons for it—— The pilot seems to think as much.

“The light of explosions shone from our allies’ ships. In comparison, I couldn’t see any of that from our enemies. Our fleet was a paper tiger, but I certainly never expected them to be that weak. They got conceited about being able to win as long as they had the numbers.”

The pilot’s hands shake as he recalls the scene from that time.

“There are terrific knights in the Banfield house. I’ve heard such rumors. But, I couldn’t actually believe them until I had seen the real thing in battle. That bunch, their strength is substantial. However, the most fearsome thing about them is their fascination with battle. People that aren’t even afraid of dying are the most terrifying. The Named that came out in the middle was especially terrible. It was Chengshi. That woman, in the past she’d go around going wild on both friend and foe. She, working obediently as Liam’s loyal retainer? Can you believe it?”

After that time, Liam achieved victory from a disadvantageous situation.

The pilot is asked if he hadn’t known about their strength.

“If we believed so, we wouldn’t have challenged them from the start, would we? I thought it was just idle gossip on the battlefield. That they were only somewhat strong and the rumors had been exaggerated. Even so, we had sixty times the number. Despite being fairly cautious and gathering up the numbers, we were trampled over.”

The pilot is then asked about Liam.

“Liam? For the people of the Banfield house, he’s unmistakably a benevolent lord. I’m envious to the point of tears. Our lord was a terrible man, you see.”

Was a terrible man—— Past tense.

What might have happened?

“——He died. After we survivors returned to the territory, the count and his successor candidates were already dead. The rumor is that they were silenced to keep their mouths shut, but we have no idea what actually happened. But, the way they died was considerably hideous.”

More questions are about to be asked, but the pilot gets up from his seat.

“That’s enough, isn’t it. I don’t want to remember any more of this. I’ve decided never again to get involved with the Banfield house or Liam. I’ve seen various things on the battlefield but—— They’re true monsters.”

◇

The battle having ended, I left the cleanup to my subordinates and relaxed aboard my ship—— Not.

As soon as the battle ends, Marie attends to my medical treatment while crying.

“Liam-sama’s precious body is—— is—— This Marie is ashamed of her own worthlessness. Please accept my death as an apology.”

“Are you a dumbass? Never mind that, continue treating me.”

Even if I say that, Marie with her overflowing devotion is wilfully thinking ‘The Liam-sama that bestows forgiveness on me is magnificent!’ in her mind.

Her wonderful corporate slave nature is nauseating.

Since I was a corporate slave for a time in my previous life, I dislike things like that.

Simple workers are the best in the world.

Having no expectations, I reward them as much as they’ve worked.

With this, it’s good. This is good.

Having finished with the first aid, I redress myself and sit formally in seiza on the tatami I prepared.

Riho and Fuuka are already seated as such, and Ellen too follows after me.

The ones in front of us are Master and his family.

“Master, it’s wonderful that you’re safe.”

I lower my head, then Riho and Fuuka lower theirs as well.

Ellen seems somewhat reluctant for some reason though—— it won’t do not to scold her later.

Master Yasushi laughs.

“Ahahaha—— I’m thankful for your help.”

What a magnanimous master.

However, we have something that we’re bothered by.

The first to speak is Fuuka.

“Master! Why were ya captured by that Original Issen-ryu bunch! If it’s Master, those small fries would be done in with one stroke!”

——That’s right. Why exactly had Master been captured?

And then, Riho gets anxious about Master’s person.

“Also what do you mean you can’t fight!? Why can’t such a strong Master do so!”

Adding on to their two questions, I add on one more.

“Master, it’s a shame but the instructor of the Original Issen-ryu has escaped. I had believed he would be together with the governor, but even with Kukri and his group’s help, we haven’t grasped his location.”

Master folds his arms and closes his eyes hearing our questions.

And, the one I’m even more curious about is that gigantic octopus.

“Also, that monster. It held a grudge against the Issen-ryu. Did something happen?”

It should be the first time I saw it.

In spite of that, it knew all about us. No, it knew about the Issen-ryu.

The gigantic octopus that was openly hostile, claiming that the Issen-ryu cannot be allowed to exist.

Master Yasushi opens his eyes and answers our questions.

“It seems that the time has come to tell you everything.”

Master begins to tell us of the secrets behind the Issen-ryu.

The Issen-ryu's Mission

Despite showing an outwardly calm look—— Yasushi is screaming in his mind.

(What am I gonna do? What should I even do? If I can't succeed in talking them down here and then escape, I'll be killed!)

For some reason, Liam and the others believe that Yasujirou and him are two different people.

They're thinking that the Original Issen-ryu is a branch of the Issen-ryu that had fallen into disgrace.

And also, there was that monster.

The monster that suddenly appeared wanting to kill them.

——Yasushi, of course, has no single recollection of it from before.

(Why is a fraudster like me being targeted for death by a monster? But thinking about it, these guys are monsters in human form, too. ——What does it even mean to cut without drawing the blade. Those aren't street performances.)

Yasushi's mind spins.

(Calm down. It'll be fine if I can get through this. If I do, a tranquil life will be waiting for me again!)

Yasushi thinks that being pursued by the Supremacy and having his life targeted by idiots seeking to claim the title of Sword God is preferable to being captured by Liam and the others.

A flash of insight hits Yasushi.

(That's right! Since there might not just be one of those inhuman monsters out there, shouldn't I just have these inhuman guys take them on?)

If there are more beings like the giant octopus out there, Yasushi won't be able to sleep in peace.

Then, if that's the case—— He should just have Liam and the others defeat them.

Yasushi begins to build up explanations in his mind.

His son Yasuyuki and his wife Nina look at him from behind with worried gazes.

Nina speaks to him.

“Yasu-kun, you were actually the master of a great noble? Umm—— I think it's really rare for a count to lower his head, though?”

Hearing Nina's words, Liam smiles gently.

“It's true that I rarely lower my head. But, Master and his family are the exception.”

Nina is relieved seeing the smiling Liam, but—— Yasushi knows.

(If anyone other than that tells him to lower his head, it seems like he'll kill them on the spot. No, he most definitely will. It'll be the end of me if he ever finds out that I'm the impostor, Yasujirou!)

Yasushi creates a heavy mood, and begins to speak slowly.

“I must enlighten Liam-dono of the Issen-ryu's mission.”

“Our mission?”

“Yes. There was that ferocious monster you saw earlier, wasn’t it? The Issen-ryu is—— a sword technique created for battling with those monsters.”

“What did you say!?”

Behind the shocked Liam, Riho and Fuuka are in a similar state with wide-open eyes.

“That’s our enemy?”

“Yea it’s true, I don’t think other swordsmen will be any good, but. The only one able to fight those is Senior Disciple, isn’t it?”

Seeing the two of them talking seriously to each other, Yasushi internally makes a guts pose.

(Alright, I can do it! B-but, the problem lies with this one.)

Ellen lies in his field of vision, but she’s the only one regarding him with doubt.

(T-this one alone is suspicious of me.)

Cold sweat runs down his back.

It’s because Yasushi no longer sees Ellen, too, as human.

The pressure he feels is no small thing, seeing as he’d end up being killed in an instant if they fought.

Ellen speaks. Her tone is an inquisitorial one.

“Yasushi-sama, may I ask one question?”

“W-what is it?”

“The Issen-ryu may be a sword art for battling those monsters, but why is it that many portions of it closely resemble the forms of other schools of

swordsmanship?”

Because Yasushi appropriated forms from other schools for the Issen-ryu, its basic movements were all but a cobbling together of said forms.

Yasushi panics having that called into doubt, but Liam rebukes Ellen hearing her question.

“Ellen! How could you say such a thing to Master Yasushi. Don’t you trust his words, or the Issen-ryu?”

Ellen glares at Yasushi even through her fear of Liam.

“W-what I trust is Master and Master’s sword techniques. In addition, there’s been malicious gossip that Issen-ryu is stealing techniques from other schools. ——It’s been weighing on my mind.”

Calvin passed around such rumors when he was trying to undermine Liam’s credibility.

Riho and Fuuka both direct killing intent towards Ellen but——

(Don’t the three of you sneak glances at me! Don’t tell me you all’ve been concerned about it too!?)

——They’re looking at Yasushi even as they lecture Ellen, as if they had been concerned after all. They sneak glances at Yasushi’s countenance even as they say things like “Don’t ask about such a thing!” to her.

However, Yasushi doesn’t panic even in such a situation.

After all, Yasushi is a man that has lived this long using his mouth alone.

It can even be said that nothing besides his mouth is reliable, but this very moment is a high-stakes battle.

“That is because every school’s origin can be traced to the Issen-ryu. Nay! Every martial art itself can be traced back to the Issen-ryu!”

Haphazardly saying something like that, a question mark surfaces above Riho and Fuuka's heads.

Ellen's gaze becomes colder and colder, yet Liam alone is deep in contemplation.

Liam speaks of his own conclusion, perhaps thinking that some deeper meaning lies in Yasushi's words.

"The ultimate system of martial arts is the Issen-ryu, would that be what you're saying?"

"Yes, that's it!"

Borrowing Liam's help, Yasushi explains further.

"Why does man pursue martial arts? Why do they pursue the sword? Weapons and the like are available everywhere, and yet man has longed for the sword since time immemorial—— It is because their instincts tell them that there's something more to it than conflicts between humans. Many monsters like the one from today still exist in the world out there!"

(They do, I hope? Welp, there'll be some if they search, right? Even if there isn't, I can just say that they haven't found them, too.)

Interweaving matters in that he seemed to have heard from somewhere before, Yasushi carries on convincingly.

"The ones anticipating that and refining their techniques are the Issen-ryu! The Issen-ryu is the sword that protects the weak from those monsters! It was created in order to do battle with those much stronger than humans."

Liam hangs his head hearing that.

"I'd been thinking that was probably the case. The Issen-ryu is way too strong after all. ——However if so, is it fine to leave the fallen Original Issen-ryu as it is? Also, why was Master kidnapped by that bunch?"

Behind him, Nina has a reaction as the topic moves to the Original Issen-ryu.

Yasushi whips around immediately and speaks to her with his eyes.

(Please keep quiet about the fact that I'm the instructor of the Original Issen-ryu!)

(Got it, Yasu-kun!)

It's the coordination of husband and wife with hearts linked.

Nina cradles Yasuyuki and stealthily covers his mouth.

After seeing that, Yasushi turns around and continues.

"The Original Issen-ryu is already as good as dead. The instructor was killed by Governor Chester as he made to escape."

"So that was the case. However, his disciples had quite the nerve forgiving Chester, didn't they?"

"Their eyes were probably blinded by greed. How wretched."

It's a terrible remark given that he himself was the one who established the Original Issen-ryu out of greed.

"And then, what was the reason you were kidnapped, Master?"

"Having abandoned the Issen-ryu's mission, they came to have me cooperate as well. ——Because the Issen-ryu has ended up becoming famous thanks to someone."

A small-minded man saying a snide comment to Liam—— That's Yasushi.

And then, he forcibly ends this conversation to prevent them from knowing that he himself was Yasujirou.

“Therefore, Liam-dono and the rest, please eradicate the world of these monsters from now on. The Issen-ryu exists for that purpose.”

Liam nods in silence, but then.

“I understand. Before that—— Kukri.”

He narrows his eyes, calling a strange man from the shadows.

As Yasushi sneakily examines Kukri’s appearance in fear, Liam gives an order to him.

“I can’t believe the Count had nothing to do with Master Yasushi’s kidnapping. Investigate it for the time being. After that, teach everyone clearly what happens to those who pick a fight with the Issen-ryu. Make them an example.”

Kukri quietly disappears into the shadows.

“——Acknowledged.”

It’s inevitable that Yasushi finds a chill running down his back.

(Y, you two, what was that conversation! D-don’t tell me, you’re gonna assassinate those who opposed you? No, that can’t be. That can’t be, right?)

At Kukri’s disappearance, Liam fixes his posture.

“And then, please let me ask just one more question. Why is Master unable to fight? If it’s Master, even that giant octopus should be able to be defeated, isn’t it?”

Yasushi takes off his upper attire all of a sudden, showing the diagonal scar left on his body.

Liam and the others are in shock seeing that scar.

“That scar is!?”

“I went up against a mighty foe. However, my strength was insufficient.”

“M, Master had!? There are enemies stronger than even that giant octopus?”

Liam has a mysterious conviction that the giant octopus he could take down could also be defeated by Yasushi.

(It'll be terrifying if there's actually something more fearsome than that thing. But, let's just say as such to this guy.)

“——There are. The enemy is an even greater evil. I had ended up being defeated at the hands of that.”

Nina makes an alarmed face upon realizing what that scar actually was, but immediately schools her expression into a sorrowful one. As expected of husband and wife.

Liam looks at Yasushi's scar.

“It's considerably sharp swordsmanship. It's almost as if there's even hatred in—— By some chance, is the injury the reason you're unable to fight? If that's the case, I'll arrange for an Elixir right away. Marie, go prepare an Elixir.”

“Yes, Liam-sama.”

Yasushi panics hearing that.

(This guy, is he just carrying around something like an Elixir!? No, that's not the issue.)

Yasushi puts on his upper attire while shaking his head.

“Liam-dono, I have been defeated. I've somehow gotten through with my life intact, but I can no longer release a Flash. My heart and body are both bearing a deep injury, you see.”

“I’ll treat you! My house has gathered excellent physicians. Surely, even Master’s injury can...!”

(I’ll be troubled if I am treated! In the first place, it doesn’t hurt anymore either!)

Yasushi casts his eyes downward.

“My Flash wasn’t able to win. I probably won’t be able to even now.
——Therefore, please let me entrust the Issen-ryu and its mission to Liam-dono.”

“M, me? B-but...”

Yasushi speaks sternly at the flustered Liam.

“Why are you getting timid for! Liam-dono is my successor! And, the one who will carry on the true Issen-ryu!”

Hearing that, Liam nods quietly, promising to fulfill the mission of the Issen-ryu—— which was created as a lie in this place.

“I understand. I’ll inherit the hopes of Master and the Issen-ryu.”

“I’m relieved. With this I’m already——”

Yasushi is thinking of nothing but escaping, but he ends up getting shot in the back.

Nina has betrayed him.

“Ah, if it’s possible, could I borrow your strength for Yasuyuki’s sake?”

Yasushi whips around.

(What’s the meaning of this! I wanted to escape from these guys, and yet!)

Nina is Yasushi’s wife, but at the same time, she’s Yasuyuki’s mother.

She's fine with facing misfortune herself, but she can't allow misfortune to befall her son.

(Sorry, Yasu-kun.)

Nina hopes that Liam can give Yasuyuki a better future.

“H-how about it? I wish for this child to study well. Is it possible for him to stay on a planet with a good environment?”

Hearing Nina make a request like that, Liam thumps his own chest.

“Please leave it to me, Madam! This Liam sera Banfield will welcome all of you to his home planet. In addition, since I'm still able to take on two more disciples, I'll make Yasuyuki-kun into a wonderful swordsman of the Issen-ryu!”

At Liam's declaration, voices of dissent rise from behind him.

“Wait up, Senior Disciple! I'm fully-fledged too, aren't I? Then, I'll take care of Yasuyuki! After all is said and done, Yasuyuki is my little brother after all.”

Fuuka can't keep quiet either seeing Riho say so.

“Yasuyuki's better off with me, don't ya think! Dual sword style's cool after all!”

As the two bring up taking care of Yasuyuki themselves, Liam's selfishness explodes.

“No way. Master's precious son will be my disciple.”

Riho and Fuuka complain, yet Ellen makes a complicated expression looking at the scene before her.

However—— Yasushi doesn't acknowledge such a thing.

(Certainly, I might be a piece of shit, but I'm not a parent that would hand off their kid to these non-humans! I'll definitely protect Yasuyuki alone!)

Yasushi, who doesn't wish to let his son suffer under Liam and the others, shakes his head.

“Your feelings alone are sufficient. Moreover, Yasuyuki doesn't have the talent. I'm thinking of having this child walk the conventional path.”

Liam and the others, ever faithful to Yasushi, slump their shoulders hearing that.

If he has the motivation, even if he doesn't have talent—— The three of them aren't able to say something like that after having seen the giant octopus.

If the Issen-ryu's mission is to battle things like the giant octopus, then seeing that they're unable to have Yasuyuki do such a thing, even the three of them give up.

Liam thinks for a little.

“In that case, then let me bring him up as one of my most dependable knights.”

Yasushi internally hurls abuse at Liam.

(I said not to make him do anything dangerous, and yet why a knight!)

At that, Marie who had been quietly listening in introduces herself.

“If so, then it's my turn as Liam-sama's right hand. I'll make sure I raise Yasuyuki-dono into an excellent knight.”

But, the eyes Liam looked at Marie with are cold.

“Like hell it's you. Sit down.”

“N, no way!?”

Yasushi cradles his head.

(What do I do!? What do I do now! Do I leave Yasuyuki and run? But, whatever the circumstances may be, that is—— No, in the first place, can Nina bear to part with Yasuyuki?)

As he turns around to look at her, Nina discusses with Liam.

“Well! Is it alright to receive assistance on Count-sama’s home planet?”

“Let me arrange for a mansion right away. Is there something you wish for?”

“It’s fine even if it’s small, and a garden would be perfect. In addition, please introduce me to a job.”

“Your worries about living expenses are unnecessary, Madam. I’ll be taking care of everyone after all.”

“No, I’ll work! Taking care of Yasu-kun and Yasuyuki is my job, you see!”

“I-is that so. I’ll prepare one immediately.”

Being pressured by Nina’s enthusiasm, Liam shrinks back a little and promises to arrange a job for her.

It’s already decided that they would be heading for Liam’s home planet.

Being unable to defy Nina, Yasushi slumps over, hanging his head.

(I-I’m finished. Just what was my hard work for?)

The Traitorous Yasushi

The discussion with Master ended without incident.

It's the first time I've heard of the Issen-ryu having a mission, but being told that I'll be the successor to the Issen-ryu honestly made me happy.

It seems that other than that giant octopus, this world is crawling with a troublesome bunch similar to it.

To those that are evil lords, the sparks of flames that fall upon them are to be brushed away.

I've decided in my heart to kill every single one who threatens my safety, but the problem is the enemies that even Master wasn't a match for.

Master is stronger than me. Therefore, it should be certain that mightier things than that giant octopus I defeated exist.

Be that as it may, I didn't know that the sword art I learnt coincidentally would have such a secret behind it.

I should tip my hat to the Guide's support.

It does seem as if I've even been made to bear an unnecessary fate but, if I had known I'd probably have asked Master to let me learn it from him, so there's no problem there.

“The Issen-ryu's mission is fine. But, the problem is——”

Maybe because she thought I was making a displeased face, Marie standing next to me worries about my physical condition.

“Liam-sama, as I thought, wouldn’t it have been better to have received treatment first?”

“There’s no issue. More importantly—— Show her in.”

For the sake of responding to anyone requesting a meeting with me, I was in my reception room.

The door opens to reveal Rosetta, whose eyes are red and puffy.

She dashes to my side in tears, perhaps in relief from seeing me.

It seems like she’s suppressing her urge to hug me.

“Darling, I was worried! I’d heard that you were injured but, are you alright? Let’s quickly get you treated!”

Talking on without pause, it seems like Rosetta can’t help but worry about me.

Of all people, for the ones who helped me to be something such as Rosetta’s Guard—— Guide, for the help you sent, I’ll give my sincere thanks.

But—— But! If the one you send is her, I don’t know how I should feel.

“You helped me out this time. I’m grateful, Rosetta.”

“It’s great that I can be of help to Darling.”

I had put the matter of Rosetta’s Guard aside but, I didn’t think that it’d actually increase to twenty thousand.

Their proficiency and quality were so-so, but they were stronger than the paper tiger enemy fleet.

It’s probably unmistakable that Rosetta dashing to reinforce us set our victory in stone.

——But, I did not want to become indebted to Rosetta.

“I’ll definitely repay this debt.”

As I mutter letting my frustration show through, Rosetta wipes her tears with her fingers.

“If Darling is safe, that alone is enough for me. Moreover, I’ve been helped out tons by Darling to this day, so I’m happy that I can become your strength, even just a little.”

Seeing Rosetta’s delighted face, she seems to be speaking from the heart.

But, my heart can’t be satisfied.

To think that, of all people, I have become indebted to Rosetta.

I’m cradling my head inside my heart.



Yasushi is walking around aimlessly inside the ship.

“It’s over. My life is over.”

Having slipped out of the medical bay, Yasushi had been running from the pursuing teacher’s pets Riho and Fuuka.

He becomes forlorn as he imagines his life from now on.

After all, he’ll be living under confinement at Liam’s home planet.

Liam and his two disciples are sure to come knocking on his doorstep uninvited at every turn.

He feels like his life is about to become one where he can’t relax his attention for one second.

“Even though I could run away if it was just me...”

His wife Nina would probably not let him escape.

Yasushi shivers as he remembers the terror of being slashed with a cleaver by Nina as he once made to run away.

Also, his son Yasuyuki is cute.

He's a good child that adores Yasushi's shameful self as his father.

Such a son is being taken hostage by Liam.

“Damn it all. Because of him, my life is in tatters.”

Even if he manages to escape from Liam's home planet, what's waiting for him is a life spent escaping those nuts prideful in their own strength seeking to make a name for themselves.

Also, the Supremacy and the Empire's nobility—— And even more countries are going around searching for him to hire him, misguidedly seeing Yasushi as the Sword God.

His life will be difficult whether he remains by Liam or he escapes.

But, he doesn't want it to end like this.

“I want to at least get back against that guy. If I don't pester him somehow, I won't have peace of mind! Without making him actually mad, anyway.”

Yasushi is a small-minded man, but also a faint-hearted one.

He swears a slight revenge against Liam, but something seems to have cut across his line of sight.

“Hm? There was something like a dog around here?”

The dog seemed to have entered a narrow passage.

Peering into said passage, he sees a girl further inside by herself.

Wearing a maid outfit, she's cradling her head and writhing.

But—— The dog's figure is nowhere to be found.

“Like this, everything will become as Liam pleases!?”

Yasushi gazes at that girl.

(On this battleship, I thought blindly that only people revering Liam seemed to be aboard but—— Even so, there's someone.)

Discovering the girl that holds bitter feelings towards Liam—— Ciel, Yasushi walks closer and calls out.

Stroking his unshaven chin, by atmosphere alone he gives off the impression of a magnificent swordsman.

“It seems that you're troubled for some reason.”

Hearing a voice call out and turning to look, Ciel begins to shiver as she notices Yasushi.

“Sword God! ——sama”

Seeing Yasushi before her, the man who that Liam himself said he wasn't a match for, Ciel's face pales remembering what she'd been muttering till now.

Yasushi's internally convinced that he's found a comrade.

(She's thinking that I've heard her badmouthing Liam, it seems. With people like you, it looks like I'll be able to get some payback against him in various ways.)

“Please don't be afraid like that. Frankly—— I wish to ask about Liam. To be honest, even I have been troubled by Liam in a variety of ways.”

Ciel gives a suspicious expression at Yasushi's words.

“Aren't you Liam's revered master in the sword?”

“I’m troubled after becoming famous because of that Liam. Accordingly, I’ve been considering paying him back a little.”

Even despite Ciel being half in doubt, she probably thinks that there’s no merit to Yasushi lying about such a thing.

Moreover, maybe thinking that it’d be reassuring if she could get Yasushi on her side, she begins talking at length about Liam.

“——That guy, he’s no benevolent lord like the world calls him. He’s a villain deep down inside! He ridicules his own citizens, and decides the tax increases based on his mood. If the people suffer, then I say, he should be the one that’s suffering!”

“I-I see.”

(Huh? That’s, isn’t it bad if we don’t be a little tactful about it? Even supposing it is payback, it won’t do to be careless with the finer details.)

To not stop his thoughts of retaliation there, Yasushi is such a man.

Ciel tells Yasushi about the truth.

“Everybody’s being deceived. His fiancée Rosetta-sama is the same too. Even though she’s a good person, she’s being deceived by Liam. That Liam guy, even though Rosetta-sama is around, he’s going around at his whim having fun without marrying her.”

The marriage will proceed immediately after training ends! Was the arrangement, but became indefinitely postponed due to Liam’s selfishness.

Rosetta had forgiven that.

From Ciel’s point of view, Rosetta is awfully admirable.

“I can’t forgive Liam! Onii-sama and otou-sama too have been deceived by this——”

Seeing the bitter-looking Ciel, a thought that incenses Yasushi springs to his mind.

Then, he arrives at his method of revenge.

“I accept. I’ll cooperate with you here.”

Ciel gives a grin like she’s just gotten a million comrades.

“R-really!”

Yasushi places a hand on her shoulder.

“Let me take care of it.”



Yasushi brings Ciel along as he marches towards the reception room.

In there are Liam, Marie, and Rosetta. The female knights guarding Rosetta are also present as well.

In an instant, the guards direct killing intent at Yasushi who entered suddenly.

He breaks out into a cold sweat at said killing intent, yet his expression alone is that of calm.

“Don’t you dare show bloodlust at Master, I’ll kill you.”

“P-please excuse us.”

The female knights directing killing intent at Yasushi hold it down after being told off by Liam.

Also, they apologize in a panic after realizing that it was Yasushi they were looking at.

Seeing Yasushi, Rosetta curtsies, holding up her skirt. It's a gesture where she leans over slightly with a bending of her left knee.

"I've heard about you from my fiance. My name is Rosetta. I'm Liam-sama's fiancée."

Rosetta, having stopped referring to Liam as Darling, is showing respect to Yasushi.

Seeing her figure, Yasushi thinks.

(A young lady with golden hair set in drills, huh. She's not to my fancy.)

Yasushi who likes black-haired intellectual women has no interest in Rosetta, though he does see her as a beauty.

Liam seems to be in a lousy mood.

"Master, what is the matter? If it's something urgent, I'll listen to what you need."

Liam, asking if there's any business to take care of, seems to want to escape from this place.

Yasushi is certainly a small fry, but his ability to detect people's weaknesses is beyond the average person.

(It's just as I thought! This guy, he's having a hard time with his fiancée!)

Hearing from Ciel that Liam had decided to marry Rosetta to get the court rank of Duke, Yasushi believed that there wasn't something like love in that.

Also, from Ciel's words, he surmised that Liam had been running around escaping from his marriage as well.

Ciel's eyes sparkle at seeing Liam flustered.

Liam gets shocked for a moment seeing Ciel behind Yasushi, and immediately makes a bitter expression.

“Why is Master together with Ciel?”

Seeing Liam make a doubtful expression, Yasushi seizes the imagined opportunity to attack and carries out his revenge.

“Liam-dono, I’ve heard! That even though your fiancée’s left waiting, you’ve been running from place to place without getting married to her, haven’t you!”

“Wha!?”

It isn’t just Liam.

Everyone in the area becomes speechless at Yasushi’s blunt inquiry.

Marie, for instance, might cut down whoever said that on the spot if it hadn’t been Yasushi. At any rate, she makes an awfully complicated expression on her face.

Then, she comes to stop Yasushi.

“Yasushi-sama, this problem is an exceedingly delicate issue for the house. Yasushi-sama can’t be said to be an outsider, but if at all possible we would seek your restraint in broaching this topic.”

She behaves modestly, but the surrounding people make faces that say ‘Don’t you dare start on this!’.

For better or worse, Liam alone holds all the authority.

Because of that, he’s someone who will have his selfishness forgiven.

Therefore, even if he’s running around without holding his marriage ceremony, there’s few who can give their honest opinions to Liam.

If he's still running around despite being scolded by Amagi and Brian, then no one else will get through to him.

With that setting, Yasushi came marching in rudely.

Liam can't meet his eyes, and Rosetta is making a troubled face.

Apparently, Liam is at a loss being questioned by his respected master.

(I can do it!)

From Liam's reaction, Yasushi concludes that Liam probably wouldn't get angry even if he brings up this topic.

Hence, Yasushi takes his petty revenge.

It's irrelevant even if it was a great problem that the Banfield house is facing.

“It's not praiseworthy to be running around even though you have a splendid fiancée waiting for you. Your nobility training is over too, so there shouldn't be any problems, is there? Is there something you dislike about it?”

Yasushi's saying the appropriate words, but his inner mind is different.

(I'm in the graveyard of life after getting married, and yet you alone are living a free and wilful single life; there's no way I can forgive that! You get married too! No, wait!? If this guy starts a family and has children, there'll be less times he'll visit me, won't he? I've managed to both pester him and gain something—— Truly, isn't this the perfect harassment killing two birds with one stone!)

Yasushi turns around, giving Ciel a thumbs up.

Seeing that, the surrounding people sense.

——That Ciel had told Yasushi about the state of affairs and instigated him.

Other than Rosetta—— Liam and the others all focus severe gazes on Ciel.

Ciel looks at Yasushi and shakes her head.

She seems to be saying ‘No! That’s not it!’, but Yasushi interprets it to his own convenience.

After all, they’re unrelated. They’re not even husband and wife, so they can’t do something like communicate their intentions.

(It’s still not enough!? Are you saying I should step in even further? Then!)

Staring intently at him, Yasushi makes Liam focus his attention on him, cutting off his means of escape.

“Liam-dono!”

“Y-yes!”

“How pathetic for a successor of the Issen-ryu! Go back to your territory right now and hold the marriage ceremony! As your master I’m ashamed, you know!”

“N-no, but, this is well——”

“Don’t bother arguing! In this place, right now, declare that you’ll return back and get married!”

Being overpowered by Yasushi, Liam hangs his head.

“I-I’ll accept.”

“Liam-sama!?”

Marie is shocked, but her problematic personality aside, she’s a dependable woman.

She’d started recording slightly before Liam’s statement, securing the evidence.

Then, she moves up to Rosetta.

“Rosetta-sama, we’ll return to the home planet immediately and start preparations for the ceremony!”

“Y, yes. ——Yes?”

Rosetta, too, seems bewildered like she can’t keep up with this development either.

As Yasushi turns back to Ciel, she’s now vigorously shaking her head.

(This still isn’t enough? No, any more of this and something will——
Hah!?)

Yasushi realized.

(Let’s have Liam lose even more face)

Yasushi thinks of the next prank.

Epilogue

“Liam-dono—— Do you dislike Rosetta-dono?”

“I-It’s not like that.”

Only Master and I are still in the room.

I had the others leave since he said that he wanted to have a personal conversation with me.

Then, what he questioned was my feelings towards Rosetta.

“If that’s the case, then why aren’t you getting married to her?”

“That is, well, she was to my liking before, but it’s different now or rather—— I think she’s a kind woman who worries over me, but there’s just no deciding factor, or something.”

Master folds his arms and nods, perhaps in understanding.

“Certainly, it probably feels a little heavy, but that in itself is fine. Liam-dono, once you get married as well, you’ll realize its merits.”

I don’t feel like we’re talking on the same wavelength, but I can’t say something like ‘I liked how Rosetta looked when she was enduring being pestered by me back then, but it’s different now after she became docile’ to Master.

I contemplate.

I wonder if I honestly want to get married to Rosetta?

As I think about it further, the faces of women that come to mind besides Rosetta are few.

There's many beautiful women at the mansion, but the ones that appear in my mind starting from Amagi are Ellen, Riho, and Fuuka—— even Serena's face appears among the others.

I got shocked at myself when an old woman with little relation to me came to mind, even though I was thinking about womanizing.

I'm contemplating women, and yet there were so few that even Kurt's face appeared.

You're a guy. You're in a different category so get over there already.

Tia and Marie's faces come up, but these two are special cases.

Nias and Eulisia are of the disappointing bracket, besides.

Chino? Ciel? They're in the cute bracket, so I'm not conscious of them as women.

But when I think of Rosetta, her smiling face comes to mind.

“Master—— Is it alright to get married to Rosetta like this?”

As I utter so, looking like I'd gotten the marriage blues or something, Master shows a smile.

“We all have our insecurities.”

“My reasons for marrying her aren't pure. Even so, is that alright?”

I couldn't tell him about my impure motive of wanting to marry a reluctant Rosetta, but Master looks like he's sensed something.

“Were you targeting her court rank? The nobility have various things to consider, it seems. Does Liam-dono dislike Rosetta-dono, I wonder?”

I don't dislike her. No, she's better than other women, isn't she.

It's just that I've decided to put it on hold until now, in fear that I might be betrayed someday.

"I'm scared of facing her."

"If that's the case, then it's all the more important to face her. Where has the Liam who challenges even the strongest enemies disappeared to? Liam-dono is too much of a late bloomer when it comes to matters of affection, it seems."

I didn't even think I would be talking about love with Master.

My face grows warm in embarrassment.

Master speaks.

"It's better to give an intense confession. You should marry not for the sake of your partner, but for your own. 'Quiet down and come with me!' That'll be perfect, won't it."

"——Huh? C, confess?"

"Smash her with all of your feelings, Liam-dono!"

◇

After being told so by Master, I called Rosetta to my bedroom.

I wait for her nervously.

"C-calm down, me. I'm the foremost evil lord of the Empire. I won't get flustered at just one woman. I'll just confess like an evil lord would.
——What exactly is an evil lord-like confession?"

What is an evil lord-like confession even? My junior colleagues familiar with anime and manga back then never taught me something like that.

Looking over the restless me is Amagi.

“Please calm down.”

“I-I am calm! I just wanted to walk around.”

“Is that so. Then, with this I’ll be taking my leave.”

Amagi moves to exit the room before Rosetta arrives.

“O-oi, there’s no need for you to leave, is there!?”

“At any rate, Young Master is confessing to his fiancée. I think I would be a hindrance, though?”

“I don’t need any woman who treats you as a hindrance.”

Amagi makes a complicated expression at my words.

She seems altogether delighted, disappointed, and exasperated.

“Young Master.”

“What is it?”

“Do you dislike Rosetta-sama?”

“——I don’t dislike her. If I could only choose from humans, then I like her.”

“Even so, it doesn’t matter for now. Please, make Rosetta-sama happy.”

As Amagi leaves the room, Rosetta comes in after, passing by her for an instant.

“U-umm, Darling?”

Rosetta stands in front of the door looking at me with an anxious expression.

It's already been around a century's worth of time since my previous life and my betrayal then.

I start to feel ashamed of myself for being fettered for so long by my ex-wife.

"We'll get married once we return, you know. I want the Claudia house's court rank, your family home's."

"I-I thought so. Darling's dear Master said as much, too. Yes, I'll approve! In addition——"

Being told that I wanted the court rank, Rosetta makes a smile tinged with sadness.

My decision to get married was also entirely because of Master's words.

It's unavoidable that she feels discomfort at that and yet... For that, Rosetta is admirable.

"——The position of Duke is entirely appropriate for Darling. If that's how it's going to be, both myself and okaa-sama will be happy."

"That's right. Your count rank will be stolen by me."

Rosetta casts her eyes downwards, perhaps unable to say anything more.

She's probably saddened knowing that there's no love in a political marriage befitting nobles.

And then, as the silence stretches out, Rosetta's the one who speaks first in a strained voice.

"Even so, that is fine. Even if your interest is only in my court rank, with Darling I will——"

I cut in with a raised voice, gazing at the wall of monitors displaying the vast empty void of space around us.

“I’m a greedy person! I won’t be satisfied until I’ve obtained everything!”

“Darling?”

“I’ll take everything. The Claudias’ court rank! And you, too! ——D, don’t think you’ll be able to run away. Y-you will forever——be mine.”

I ended up saying the last bit in a small voice. Yet, Rosetta sobs, stifling her lips with her hands.

“I won’t run away! I’ll absolutely never run away. I’ll forever be at your side.”

Turning around, I step up to the crying Rosetta.

T-that should have been a splendid confession as an evil lord.

——Probably.



Yasushi has a refreshed smile after parting ways with Liam.

He walks with a tipsy feeling, like he had gone off drinking somewhere.

“Whew~, that was fun.”

Getting to know about Liam actually being a late bloomer, he put on airs of a senior and instructed him in love.

He’d gotten into the mood and said various things, but everything was in the spirit of the occasion.

He could even drink alcohol for free while at it, so to Yasushi, it was perfect.

As Yasushi walks along the corridor in a good mood, he sees Ciel running at him.

“Ciel-dono! Thanks for seeing my revenge—— Gahah!?”

Ciel jumps at Yasushi and shakes him violently by the collar.

“That’s wrong! Why did you go and do something unnecessary! Once they go back and get married, it’ll normally just wrap up like that won’t it! Of all things, why did you make him decide to get married!”

“Huh!? Why!? Didn’t you mean to pester him at an acceptable level!”

Even if it’s a form of harassment for Yasushi, to the Banfield house—— To Liam, it’s an auspicious event unlike any other.

“Rosetta-sama too, was somehow oblivious-looking after returning from Liam’s room! What are you going to do if they finalize their marriage like that!”

“What did you expect from me!? Did you think I could do something extravagant!? It’s me, you know!?”

“Making Liam rehabilitate himself or something, there must have been various things!”

At Ciel’s unreasonable request, Yasushi retorts.

“Like I could do something like thaaaaat!!”

Yasushi is going through hardship exactly because he can’t, and he’ll be going through hardship from now on, too.

Ciel is teary eyed.

“Even though you gave off the air of being capable! This traitooooor!!”

◇

At a different place, on the planet Governor Chester had been working in.

A tiny octopus is crawling along the ground.

“D-don’t mess with me. This me will...”

Gudwar, who’s become tiny and is speaking with a cute childlike voice, is wandering about in search of negative emotions.

In order to regain the strength he’s lost, he’s roaming around in search of those.

“‘God of Gold’—— if not for the use of that sword, I wouldn’t have been reduced to such a sorry state. This too is completely that guy’s fault.”

Gudwar, crawling around, hears footsteps getting closer to him.

It’s the Guide with wine bottle and glass in hand.

The liquid inside the wine bottle is made from the negative feelings of those who lost their lives in the battle on this planet and in the space battle above it moments ago.

The concentrated resentment, pain, and hatred have coalesced into a liquid.

Gudwar extends a leg.

“Hand that over! It’s because of you that I—— Gugyah!?”

The Guide stomps on Gudwar as he pours the wine into his glass.

Black smoke drifts from the liquid inside like steam.

Drinking that, the Guide looks down at Gudwar.

“Having gone to great pains to gather this, there’s no way I can hand it over, right? Gudwar, thanks to you Liam has become even stronger. ——This useless creature!”

Drinking up everything in the glass, he chucks it and starts draining the bottle directly from the mouth.

Then, he discards even that—— seizing Gudwar and raising him up, opening his mouth wide.

“W, what are you doing!?”

The Guide tosses the panicking Gudwar in just like that—— chewing and gulping down.

“Hmm~, reeks of blood. But, with this my power is coming back.”

Black smoke appears from the Guide’s body, wavering in the air.

He’s regained his strength after eating Gudwar.

“Liam! This time I won’t be mistaken. With these hands you will——”

The one holding itself back behind such a Guide was—— the dog.

It glares at him while holding down a growl, but suddenly, it startles in shock and turns around.

The air splits itself open, and the enormous giant of light wearing a warrior mask peeks in at the Guide from that tear in the sky.

The cackling Guide turns around at the disquieting atmosphere.

“Haahahaha! ——Haah!?”

By the time the Guide realized, the giant of light wrenching open the tear is already clutching something in its right hand.

It moves to hand it to the Guide.

Seeing it, the Guide bursts into cold sweat.

“Y, you, that’s—— Hiiih!!”

Dropping all appearances to run, the Guide dashes up in the empty air as if there was a staircase, escaping towards outer space.

But, the giant of light grabs him with an extended left hand.

That left hand is a deadly poison to the Guide.

Furthermore, he's assaulted with a feeling like being grabbed by a red-hot metal hand.

“Gyaaah!! I'm burniiiiing!!”

Just that alone is excruciating and yet, the giant moves to forcibly press the ball of light in its right hand—— Liam's feelings of gratitude, into the Guide.

Transcending space—— It seems like the giant of light is delivering those feelings of gratitude.

The feelings of gratitude are being conveyed in a slightly more forceful manner than usual.

He doesn't know what caused it, but in it, there seems to be some complicated feelings towards the Guide.

But, it's unmistakable that it's feelings of gratitude.

Liam's feelings of gratitude—— which is exactly what the Guide hates.

“W-wait. Wait! You can't do thaaaat!!”

Intuitively sensing that he'll be killed multiple times over if he were to receive that directly, he discards his body, the hat portion coming off.

Taking in the feelings of gratitude, the body shrieks while disappearing.

“Igyaaaahawaaaah!”

Turning charred, the Guide's body disappears into the ball of gratitude like that without leaving a single speck of ash.

His actual body, the hat, spits fire like a rocket after detaching, running away into outer space.

“If I can just survive with my actual body!”

However, the giant of light is looking at him from the rent in the air.

“Hiiiih!! He’s noticed meeeee!?”

Seeing off the flying Guide, the giant of light disappears.

The dog tilts its head, then sits down on the spot after running in circles for a bit, looking upwards at the Guide.

The Guide screams something as he heads towards space.

“I’ll never ever give up, you heaaaar!! Liam, don’t think it’ll end like thiiiiiiis!!”

Doing that, the Guide’s figure becomes a glittering point, then disappears.

Author’s Afterword on Syosetu:

※ With this the updates have finished.

The next update isn’t fixed yet (^_^;

It depends on the scheduling of the print edition, but I think I’ll be posting before they go on sale again.

To begin with, there isn’t time to write until just about before the print edition goes on sale.

I do hope for your understanding.

Well then, how was the ninth volume? Please go ahead and review freely. I wait in anticipation for your reviews.